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Showing their age

‘Rotting’ of ships, tankers could compromise military’s ability to respond in the event of crisis

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Lawmakers have warned the Navy that an aging fleet of transport ships — and no clear plan to replace them — means the military might not be able to get forces across oceans in the event of a fight with Russia or China.

The Pentagon now emphasizes the need to boost the combat readiness of its forces and modernize weaponry in an era of “great power competition.” But with the planes and ships that would be called upon in a crisis to help ferry equipment and troops to conflict zones in disrepair, it’s not clear the military could get to the fight,

SEE AGE ON PAGE 2

Ready Reserve Force Vessel Cape Ray is seen at sea. The aging of the military’s fleet of transport ships has raised concerns with lawmakers about the U.S.’s ability to respond quickly to emerging threats.

Photo courtesy of Transportation.gov; ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN VENABLE/Stars and Stripes

Iraq working to halt ISIS resurgence

By NABIH BULOS
Los Angeles Times

MOSUL, Iraq — It was after dark Wednesday when three buses pulled out of Mosul and headed southeast on a desolate desert road. The passengers were government-backed paramilitary fighters. The city lights were well behind them when the convoy came under attack. By the time the shooting stopped, six paramilitary members were dead and 31 were wounded.

Iraqi authorities quickly identified the culprit: Islamic State.

The attack, one of the deadliest since Iraq declared military victory over the extremist group in December 2017, was the clearest sign yet that the war isn’t over.

It has merely shifted to a new phase: ISIS is trying to mount a comeback, and the Iraqi military is trying to root out sympathizers and sleeper cells

still embedded in the extensive territory the group once controlled.

By many accounts, the government is failing to contain a budding insurgency, the sort of resilient, underground enemy that has outlived governments around the world.

Stripped of its territory — which once encompassed a third of both Iraq and Syria — ISIS has reverted to its roots, using small, self-contained teams of operatives to conduct small-scale attacks and assassinations and to rebuild its smuggling and ransom operations.

“We’re not talking about the networks they used to have. Now it’s cells of five or six people,” said Shamkhi Mansour, a colonel in the intelligence branch of Iraq’s Counter-Terrorism Service.

Iraqi military officials, security experts and the U.S. government said that Iraq has failed to develop the extensive intelligence network that would offer the best chance of rooting out the militants.

SEE HALT ON PAGE 3

MILITARY

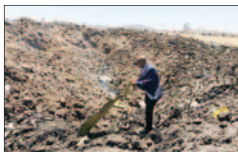
Marine leader in Japan lifts driving restrictions on servicemembers

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MILITARY

Age: Many vessels, tankers nearing 'senior citizen status'

FROM FRONT PAGE

lawmakers said Thursday.

"With no recapitalization in place and only a distant hope that Navy will find this a priority, I continue to be perplexed how the Army and the Marine Corps expects to get to the future battlefield on these aged ships," said Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., the ranking member of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces.

Among the concerns is a rapidly aging Ready Reserve Fleet of 46 transport ships, which have an average age of 44 years. The Navy's plans for extending the service life of the ships, such as procuring used vessels and devising a new construction strategy, have all failed to deliver, Wittman said.

"The steel is rotting," retired Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, administrator of the Marine Administration, testified during the hearing.

Gen. Stephen Lyons, head of U.S. Transportation Command, told lawmakers improving sealift capability is a top priority for his command.

But there also are similar prob-

lems facing the Air Force and its aging tanker fleet. While the service has accepted its first batch of new in-flight refuelers — the KC-46 — "technical deficiencies and other issues continue to plague the program as our existing tankers advance toward near senior citizen status," said Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn.

Taken together, weaknesses in air and sea lift call into question the military's ability to respond to a crisis against a well-armed and fast-moving adversary. In particular, concerns about a more aggressive Russia and China has put the spotlight on the military's logistical shortcomings.

Since the end of the Cold War, the military has not had to contend with an adversary capable of disrupting its global mobility plans, all of which were untested during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. During that time, investments in logistics capabilities declined.

In 2017, the Government Accountability Office found that the Navy may not be able to support its warships in combat if it doesn't upgrade a fleet of aging supply ships that are losing their ability to quickly provide food, fuel and equipment.



"Over 90 percent of the equipment, personnel, fuel and other cargo necessary to sustain a major conflict is moved by sealift ships, but the readiness of the aging surge sealift fleet is trending downward," the GAO said at the time.

The problems extend beyond just the Navy.

"Without a demonstrably resilient and survivable logistics capability, U.S. deterrence will suffer and the ability of the U.S. military to operate globally will

be at stake," a Defense Department special task force reported in November.

The DOD's Science Board assembled the task force of retired admirals and generals to examine the range of weaknesses in the military logistics network. After months of study, the group found "significant shortfalls that, if left unaddressed, will put at risk U.S. ability to project power and sustain the fight against a strategic competitor."

Sealift, airlift and the amount

of prepositioned military equipment overseas are all "plagued by readiness issues and shortages that must be addressed in order for the United States to defeat a strategic competitor," said the task force's report, called Survivable Logistics.

"I continue to be concerned about the modernization of our mobility forces and their ability to operate in a contested environment," Wittman said.

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Crews continue search for Marine missing in California mountains

Associated Press

BRIDGEPORT, Calif. — Authorities in California searched for a sixth day Saturday for a missing Marine after he failed to return from a backcountry skiing trip through the Sierra Nevada.

First Lt. Matthew Kraft began trekking a section of the rugged Sierra High Route on Feb. 23 and was scheduled to complete it on March 4 or 5 near Bridgeport, a town northeast of Yosemite National Park, 1st Marine Capt.

Paul Gainey said.

Kraft is an infantry officer who received survival training in the field.

"He has the skills to survive in austere environments, and we're hoping for the best here," Gainey

said.

Searchers on Friday night located a Jeep that Kraft parked at the start of his trip near Independence, about 130 miles south of Bridgeport, Inyo County sheriff's spokeswoman Carma Roper said

Saturday.

She said crews from local, state and federal agencies were searching a 400-square-mile area from Yosemite down to Sierra and Inyo National Forests and Kings Canyon National Park.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Afghan forces kill ISIS leader

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan special forces have killed an Islamic State commander said to have organized a deadly attack last week on a private construction company in eastern Afghanistan. The commander, known only as Subhan, was the target of a raid Saturday night in Nangarhar province, an ISIS stronghold where U.S. forces are based, according to provincial governor spokesman Attaullah Khogyani.

“Our special forces have conducted a raid in Momandara district last night and killed Subhan, who was the commander of a group of Daesh fighters and also the mastermind of the attack on the construction company,” Khogyani told Stars and Stripes on Sunday, using an Arabic name for ISIS. Several other suspects were arrested, and explosives were seized during the operation led by forces assigned to the National Directorate of Security — Afghanistan’s top intelligence agency — Khogyani said.

Last Wednesday, a suicide bomber attacked the entrance of the EBE construction company in Nangarhar’s capital, Jalalabad. Four militants then stormed the building, shooting employees before engaging in an hours-long standoff with Afghan forces.

All the attackers were eventually killed, as were 16 employees, Khogyani said. ISIS claimed responsibility on their Amaq news website.

“Nangarhar was quiet in the last couple of months, but once again, Daesh suddenly showed up in the city and attacked this company,” said Salar Yousef, a Nangarhar resident.

While direct talks between the U.S. and the Taliban aimed at ending the U.S.’ longest war continue, the Nangarhar attack was a reminder of the danger of other belaguerers in the conflict.

Despite more than three years of the U.S. targeting ISIS as part of its counterterrorism campaign in Afghanistan, the group still operates “some training camps” and has “created a network of cells in various Afghan cities, including Kabul,” the U.N. Security Council said in a January report. It estimated there were between 2,500 and 4,000 ISIS fighters in Afghanistan. United States Forces-Afghanistan puts the number at fewer than 2,000.

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MANWAN IZRAHIM, AFP/Getty Images

Fighters of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary force carry the coffins of fellow fighters who were killed in an ambush on a desolate road south of Mosul, Iraq, during a funeral in their hometown of Tuz Khurmatu, near the multiethnic city of Kirkuk, Iraq, on Thursday.

Halt: Few living in former militant-held strongholds still speak favorably of ISIS

FROM FRONT PAGE

“We had a victory in that we kicked out Daesh from cities, but we’ve failed in pursuing them in the rural areas and ferreting them out,” said Hisham Hashimi, a counterterrorism adviser to the Pentagon, using a derivative Arabic acronym for ISIS.

The Pentagon’s inspector general reported last month that Iraq lacked reconnaissance assets, intelligence personnel and surveillance capabilities needed to counteract the group, which advocates an extreme version of Sunni Islam.

Instead, Iraqi forces have resorted to rounding up large numbers of Sunnis and holding sham trials of ISIS suspects, a strategy that costs the Shiite-dominated government vital support and could increase support for the extremists.

According to activists and security personnel, tens of thousands of people across the country have been wrongly accused of supporting ISIS because their names are similar to those of wanted militants.

There has also been little allowance made for the many people who supported the extremists less out of ideological conviction than out of fear for their lives.

Iraqis caught in the dragnet can languish for months in crowded jails while police visit their neighborhoods to investigate. In many cases, according to three security officers, the police extort bribes to clear people of wrongdoing.

ISIS is all too familiar with the dangers of this strategy. Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite Muslim who served as Iraq’s prime minister from 2006 to 2014, used it against ISIS.

At the time, the group was operating clandestinely, forging links in rural areas with Sunni leaders sympathetic to its cause, attempting to lay the groundwork for a massive takeover.

Hoping to stomp out any support, al-Maliki transformed security services into death squads that oppressed Sunni-dominated areas. His approach backfired.

In mid-2014, when ISIS militants began seizing Iraqi territory and building a caliphate, many Sunnis welcomed them as liberators.

Many Iraqis insist that history is unlikely to repeat itself. In former ISIS strongholds such as Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq, it’s difficult to find anybody who speaks favorably about the group.

“There is not a single citizen in Mosul who

respects Daesh,” said Bashir Hussein Fathi, a politician there. “I haven’t seen a single citizen complimenting them.”

“Even those who were considered good people and who joined the group — now people speak of them badly,” he said. “It’s become a black spot on someone’s character.”

He said residents were cooperating more with security services to pinpoint ISIS infiltrators, especially after the government reactivated local police groups.

Maj. Gen. Saad Allaq, head of Iraq’s military intelligence directorate, lauded residents in ISIS areas who “had a primary role in bringing us information against Daesh.”

But he and others said the government was not spending enough funds to cultivate new sources.

In one case described by a security expert who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the subject, the Iraqi government nearly missed the chance to cultivate a high-level defector from ISIS. The U.S.-led

coalition in the region finally stepped in and paid \$2 million for his cooperation. Another problem is that with seven intelligence services operating in the country, all working with no clear jurisdiction, there is a greater chance of important information getting lost.

A Mosul-based special forces colonel who spoke on the condition that he not be named blamed the issue on a lack of trust among the security services. “In America, they combined databases and increased coordination over two buildings falling,” he said, referring to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. “We haven’t done this over whole cities falling.”

Perhaps most worrisome, ISIS has started operating more openly in rural areas southwest of Mosul, including Hatra, the Hamrin Mountains and the deserts of Anbar.

We should be having military operations in those remote regions, but there aren’t even reconnaissance flights,” said Mansour, the colonel.

SDF forces resume ISIS offensive in eastern Syria

By PHILIP ISSA
Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed Syrian fighters resumed their offensive on the last area held by Islamic State in eastern Syria on Sunday after days of calm that saw thousands of civilians leave the area.

Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, tweeted that operations began after the deadline for ISIS gunmen to surrender expired.

At about sunset, sniper fire was seen coming from ISIS positions as the SDF pounded the area held by the extremists. An SDF commander who identified himself as Bilal said Sunday’s fighting “was the heaviest clashes held ‘seen since then.’”

The fighting came a day after an SDF official said they could soon resume the offensive against ISIS, adding that the battle could last three days. SDF official Aras Orkesh said on Saturday that about 2,500 fighters are ready for the battle in and around the eastern village of Baghouz, where ISIS fighters still have a presence.

Under the cover of heavy coalition bombing on March 1 and 2, SDF forces advanced on the besieged tent encampment, leaving a corridor for residents to leave. Following that operation, thousands of residents and many fighters evacuated Baghouz over the next four days. But since Friday, only a small group has come out, raising speculation that a renewed military offensive is about to begin.

Bali, the SDF spokesman, tweeted Sunday that the decision to resume the offensive came after thousands of civilians left Baghouz, which is the last village held by ISIS.

“Our forces are ready now to start and finish what is left in ISIS’ hand” Bali added. A U.S. senior defense official said in Washington on Friday that it would not be a surprise, based on current conditions, if it took another couple of weeks to finish “mopping up” the ISIS enclave.

The official, who could not be identified by name under Pentagon ground rules, said nearly all of the 20,000, including women and children, are seen as ISIS followers or adherents.

The area on the east bank of the Euphrates River in the province of Deir el-Zour, which borders Iraq, has been under attack by the SDF since September. After capturing the surrounding towns and villages over the past six months, the SDF in recent weeks advanced on Baghouz from three sides, besieging it.

The capture of Baghouz would be a milestone in the devastating four-year campaign to defeat the group’s so-called “caliphate” that once covered a vast territory straddling both Syria and Iraq.

MILITARY



MARY CALKIN/Courtesy of the U.S. Army National Guard

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Eric Smith, shown speaking to troops on Feb. 20 in Thailand, has loosened driving restrictions for III Marine Expeditionary Force Marines and sailors in Japan.

Driving restrictions lifted for III MEF Marines, sailors

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The top U.S. Marine in Japan has lifted driving restrictions for young Marines and sailors attached to the III Marine Expeditionary Force just three months after giving them an extra hour of off-base liberty.

Lt. Gen. Eric Smith, III Marine Expeditionary Force commander, signed the policy Feb. 26 and announced it to the fleet in a video message March 1.

Although individual commanders can continue to impose the driving restriction, Smith's announcement is certain to mean more young Marines and sailors in Japan will be behind the wheel.

"If you have a license, you wish to drive, you have a good record, you're a mature individual — Marine or sailor, you should be allowed to drive," Smith said in the video message. "You take your test, you get your insurance, you go through all of the training that is required by the government of Japan and you should have a license."

He instructed unit commanders to ensure Marines get their licenses expeditiously, in no more than a month's time.

Officials with III MEF declined to publicize the details of its liberty policy.

The new order also solidified guidance in November that gave Marines an added hour of liberty. Sergeants and below now have a 1 a.m. curfew. Officers and staff noncommissioned officers do not have a curfew.

'I want you to enjoy the island (Okinawa). I want you to enjoy mainland Japan. But you have to conduct yourselves well.'

Lt. Gen. Eric Smith

III Marine Expeditionary Force commander in a video message

Drinking in bars and other public places for all III MEF Marines and sailors is prohibited after midnight.

"There is no one who can consume alcohol publicly between midnight and [5 a.m.]," Smith said in his video message.

Smith said the rules were changed to give Marines and sailors more time to enjoy their surroundings.

"I want you to enjoy the island," he said. "I want you to enjoy mainland Japan. But you have to conduct yourselves well."

Liberty restrictions have typically followed in the wake of high-profile crimes committed by U.S. servicemembers in Okinawa. The restrictions are unpopular with servicemembers and are often one of the first complaints made by Marines and sailors about being stationed in the III MEF area of operations.

However, Americans stationed on the tiny island prefecture typically commit crimes at a lower rate than the civilian population.

Okinawa has a population of about 1.4 million, including approximately 50,000 U.S. military and civilian personnel and their families.

U.S. servicemembers committed about 2.75 crimes per 1,000 people on Okinawa between 1972 and 2016, according to a Stars and Stripes analysis of arrest record data in December 2016. By comparison, local civilians committed seven crimes per 1,000 people, the same analysis showed.

However, a comparison of drunken-driving arrests is more problematic for U.S. forces.

From approximately July 2014 to July 2016, Okinawa police made 3,811 drunken-driving arrests, police told Stars and Stripes. Of those, 136 were U.S. citizens in Japan under the status of forces agreement. SOFA defines the legal status of the U.S. armed forces stationed in host countries.

Those numbers work out to approximately 2.9 drunken-driving arrests per 1,000 people locally, and about 2.7 per 1,000 for SOFA members.

The number of drunken-driving crashes causing injury or death on Okinawa in that same period was approximately 4.2 per 10,000 people for SOFA personnel, compared with 2.2 per 10,000 locally.

Okinawa police said one of the biggest problems involving U.S. personnel is day-

after driving, when a driver who drank heavily the night before may still exceed the legal maximum blood-alcohol content of 0.03 percent the next day.

Japan has a zero tolerance policy for drunken driving. Exceeding 0.03 percent could bring a driving-under-the-influence charge with a penalty of up to three years in prison or a \$4,400 fine.

"The goal of this update is to better allow Marines, sailors, and their families more opportunity to enjoy the unique cultures of the Pacific region," III MEF spokesman Marine 1st Lt. David Mancilla wrote in a statement to Stars and Stripes regarding the new policy.

"Some of the changes affected curfew hours, driving privileges, liberty boundaries and the need for liberty buddies in certain situations. With these changes we continue to understand that any questionable conduct weakens our alliance and detracts from our ability to conduct our mission."

Smith's policy also abolished any curfew or driving restrictions for III MEF Marines and sailors living in Hawaii.

Furthermore, it stated that sergeants and below in III MEF need a liberty buddy only if they intend to drink alcohol. No one else needs one, though Smith recommended their continued use.

Sergeants and below who are on Okinawa for 179 days or less need a liberty buddy regardless of circumstance after 10 p.m.

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MILITARY

Ruling leads to years-old rape case dismissal

Spangdahlem pilot's conviction overturned following last year's court decision to impose statute of limitations

By JENNIFER H. SWAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The dismissal of a former Spangdahlem fighter pilot's 2014 rape conviction last month marks the latest in overturned rape convictions, following the U.S. military's top appellate court's decision last year to impose a statute of limitations on years-old rape cases.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces last month set aside the court-martial findings and sentence against Lt. Col. Michael Briggs, who had been convicted of raping an airman when the two were on a temporary duty assignment at Mountain Air Force Base in 2005. She reported it in 2013.

The court decided that the crime was subject to a five-year statute of limitations and that a 2006 law passed by Congress to eliminate statute of limitations for rape was not retroactive.

At the time of the Briggs' trial, military court precedent held that there was no time limit for bringing rape charges. The Uniform Code of Military Justice contains a baseline five-year statute of limitations for most offenses, but Congress amended it in 1986 to add exceptions, including for "any offense punishable by death."

The court in two previous decisions ruled that rape had no statute of limitations, since for many years, the offense carried a maximum punishment of death under the UCMJ. The court held to that interpretation despite a 1977 Supreme Court decision that ruled death is an unconstitutional punishment for the rape of an adult.

But last year, in a case against Air Force Lt. Col. Edzel Mangahas that had never went to trial, the appeals court reversed 20 years of precedent. In October 2015, Mangahas, then a lieutenant colonel, had been charged with raping a fellow cadet in her dorm room at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., 18 years earlier.

The other cadet had made the allegation at the time, but did not

‘An assault is an assault, whether it happened 20 years ago or yesterday and they ought to all be chargeable.’

Lory Manning
Service Women's Action Network

participate in an investigation. In January 2014, she made a new report to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Trial proceedings were put on hold pending an appellate review. Mangahas raised several objections, including that the charge was brought after the statute of limitations had run out.

In its decision, the court reinterpreted the statute of limitations for rape of an adult. Because "there is, in fact, no set of circumstances under which anyone could constitutionally be punished by death for the rape of an adult woman," the court said, the crime should carry the same five-year limit as other military crimes not punishable by death.

The timing was fortuitous for Briggs, whose appeal before the Supreme Court on a separate issue was still pending at the time.

Briggs' attorneys asked the Supreme Court to send the case back to the court of appeals in light of Mangahas, said Stephen Vladeck, a law professor at the University of Texas School of Law who represented Briggs in the appeals process.

Two issues were raised in Briggs that weren't addressed in Mangahas, Vladeck said, including whether a 2006 amendment by Congress doing away with a statute of limitations for rape of an adult was retroactive.

In dismissing the findings against Briggs, the appeals court ruled the amendment did not apply prior to 2006.

The Mangahas decision has also led to another rape conviction dismissal in a lower military court of appeals. That case involved charges that Richard Collins, an Air Force master sergeant, had raped a young airman, a student of his, while he was a course instructor at Sheppard

Air Force Base, Texas, in 2000.

Collins pleaded not guilty, but at a court-martial at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., in 2017, he was convicted and sentenced to 198 months in jail and a dishonorable discharge.

The U.S. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals dismissed the findings against Collins last summer, based on the Mangahas decision.

"The same reasoning applies to an alleged rape that occurred in August 2000. We are compelled to follow our superior court's precedent and take similar action," the decision says in part.

The case is now expected to go to the armed forces court of appeals.

Victims' rights advocates say the Mangahas decision could discourage rape reporting and make it harder for servicemembers to successfully press charges in older cases, such as that of Sen. Martha McSally, an Arizona Republican and the first female U.S. fighter pilot to fly in combat, McSally told a Senate Armed Services subcommittee on Wednesday that she was raped years ago by a superior officer while serving in the Air Force.

McSally, 52, said she did not report being raped because she did not trust the system and felt ashamed and confused. The Air Force quickly apologized to McSally and said it was committed to eliminating "this reprehensible behavior and breach of trust in our ranks."

In the Briggs case, the victim informed her supervisor at the time of the alleged offense, but the supervisor suggested she and Briggs "work things out" without involving law enforcement. The woman also confided in a couple of friends. No official report was filed.

In 2013, the woman, by then a staff sergeant, decided to report

her rape again after she attended an Air Force sexual assault briefing. Briggs, who'd pleaded not guilty, was convicted in part by his admission during a recorded phone call. "I'm sorry I raped you and will always be sorry that I raped you," he said, according to court documents.

Spangdahlem officials said they could not comment on what will happen to Briggs; whether, for instance he'll be reinstated or permitted to apply for voluntary separation. The government has 90 days from the date of the appeals' court decision to petition the Supreme Court to review the lower court's findings, said Capt. Andrea Valencia, a Spangdahlem base spokeswoman.

"Until that decision is made, the appellate process remains," she said.

The Mangahas decision also derailed the Army's case against retired Gen. James J. Grazier, who was charged with raping a minor on repeated occasions while on active duty from 1983 to 1989.

The Army was planning to court-martial Grazier, 69, in the spring of 2018 but a military judge dismissed the charges in March of that year, about a month after the ruling on Mangahas was issued.

Though Mangahas dealt with an adult rape case, U.S. Army Circuit Judge Col. Daniel Brookhart noted in his ruling on Grazier that at the time of the alleged offenses, there was no UCMJ article criminalizing the rape of a child and the age of the victim was not an element of the offense, Army Times reported.

But while the Mangahas decision may tie the military's hands in prosecuting old rape cases, civilian courts may have freer rein, depending on state laws. Grazier is to be tried in April

on rape and incest charges in Virginia, which has no statute of limitations on rape charges. Some of the accusations against Grazier were alleged to have taken place while Grazier was stationed in Virginia.

Lory Manning, a retired Navy captain and the director of government operations at the Service Women's Action Network, or SWAN, said the Mangahas decision should not affect recent or future cases.

But it was "upsetting" to hear that some military court rape convictions have been overturned based on a statute of limitations, Manning said in an interview Thursday.

"Particularly since as we saw yesterday with Sen. McSally, people didn't trust the system back in those days, even people who are fairly senior or officers," she said. "Now there are changes that make it a little bit more likely that you'll get some attention, (but) you can't report those and feel like you'll get justice."

It's unclear whether Congress could ensure the 2006 amendment is made retroactive, Manning said, but she thinks it should be.

"An assault is an assault, whether it happened 20 years ago or yesterday and they ought to all be chargeable," she said.

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Aviation buffs look to start USAF base museum

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Aviation buffs are trying to establish a museum that would chronicle Nebraska's role in the history of American aviation and focus on what once was Lincoln Air Force Base.

Lincoln native Rob Brantling told the Lincoln Journal Star that the group is trying to form a nonprofit that would allow pursuit of funds to fund the museum. He also said the Lincoln Airport Authority has expressed interest in leasing a former base chapel to house the artifacts.

"We still have a lot of work to do, but we're

seeing a lot of interest from the Lincoln area aviation fans," Brantling said. "Now we just have to start the process of finding donors, getting grants and putting a board together."

The base was first known as Lincoln Army Airfield when it was built in 1942 and served as an airfield and mechanic training school during World War II. The Nebraska State Historical Society said the airfield later served as a Navy Reserve Training Station and Nebraska Air National Guard base before finally becoming the Lincoln Municipal Airport. The Air Force then turned it into Lincoln Air Force Base, hosting B-47 strategic bombers, a refueling squadron and overseeing an Atlas

missile detachment. In 1963, the city of Lincoln and the Strategic Air Command agreed to share the base facilities. The Lincoln Air Force Base was permanently deactivated three years later.

The museum idea came to him he was 15 years old, Brantling said, and he began collecting photos and videos.

"I've always been an aviation fan, and there's just not a lot of Lincoln-centric aviation history being shown," said Brantling, who works at the Ronald Reagan Minuteman Missile State Historic Site near Cooperstown, N.D.

NATION

Hidden FDA reports detail medical device failures

By CHRISTINA JEWETT
Kaiser Health News

Dr. Douglas Kwazneski was helping a Pittsburgh surgeon remove an appendix when something jarring happened: The surgical stapler meant to cut and seal the tissue around the appendix locked up.

Kwazneski later turned to the Food and Drug Administration's public database that tracks medical device failures and "there was nothing," he said. Yet when he surveyed leading surgeons on the matter, he discovered that more than two-thirds had experienced a stapler malfunction or knew a peer who did. Such failures can have deadly consequences.

Kwazneski had no idea the FDA had quietly granted the makers of surgical staplers a special "exemption" allowing them to file reports of malfunctions in a database hidden from doctors and from public view.

"I don't want to sound overdramatic here, but it seemed like a cover-up," said Kwazneski, who practiced in Pasco County, Fla., from 2016 through earlier this year.

The FDA has built and expanded a vast and hidden repository of reports on device-related injuries and malfunctions, says a Kaiser Health News investigation shows. Since 2016, at least 1.1 million incidents

1st immunotherapy drug for breast cancer approved

Associated Press

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the first immunotherapy drug for breast cancer.

Swiss drugmaker Roche's Tecentriq was OK'd Friday for treating advanced triple-negative breast cancer, which accounts for about 15 percent of cases.

It's to be given with chemotherapy, the standard treatment.

Mount Sinai breast cancer specialist Dr. Amy Tiersten, in New York, called it "tremendously exciting news."

Approved for two other cancers, Tecentriq works by boosting the immune system's ability to spot and kill cancer cells.

In a study of 900 women, the benefits were modest. Those who received Tecentriq plus chemo went two months longer on average without their cancer worsening compared with those on chemo alone.

The combo caused nerve pain, nausea and other side effects.

Tecentriq costs about \$13,400 per month.

in countless surgeries. They have included surgical staplers, balloon pumps snaked into vessels to improve circulation and mechanical breathing machines.

An FDA official said the program is for issues that are "well-known and well-documented with the FDA" and that it was reformed in 2017 as a new, voluntary summary reporting program was put in place for up to 5,600 devices.

Yet the program, in all its iterations, has been so obscure that it is unknown to many of the doctors and engineers dedicated to improving device safety. Even a former FDA commissioner said he knew nothing of the program.

KHN pored over reams of public records for oblique references to reporting exemptions. After months of questions to the FDA, the agency confirmed the existence of reporting-exemption programs and thousands of never-before-acknowledged instances of malfunctions or harm.

Amid the blackout in information about device risks, patients have been injured, hundreds of times in some cases, lawsuits and FDA records show.

"The public has a right to know about this," said Dr. S. Lori Brown, a former FDA official who accessed the data for her research.

Religious leaders express views about signing Bibles

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT
Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — President Donald Trump was just doing what he could to raise spirits when he signed Bibles at an Alabama church for survivors of a tornado outbreak, many religious leaders say, though some are offended and others say he could have handled it differently.

Hershael York, dean of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary School of Theology in Louisville, Ky., said he didn't have a problem with Trump signing Bibles, like former presidents have, because he was asked and because it was important to the people who were asking.

"Though we don't have a national faith, there is faith in our nation, and so it's not at all surprising that people would have politicians sign their Bibles," he said. "Those Bibles are meaningful to them, and apparently, these politicians are too."

But the Rev. Donnie Anderson, executive minister of the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, said she was offended by the way Trump scrawled his signature Friday as he autographed Bibles and other things, including hats, and posed for photos. She viewed it, she said, as a "calculated political

move" by the Republican president to court his evangelical voting base.

Presidents have a long history of signing Bibles, though earlier presidents typically signed them as gifts to send with a spiritual message. President Ronald Reagan signed a Bible that was sent secretly to Iranian officials in 1986. President Franklin Roosevelt signed the family Bible his attorney general used to take the oath of office in 1939.

It would have been different, Anderson said, if Trump had signed a Bible out of the limelight for someone with whom he had a close connection.

"For me, the Bible is a very important part of my faith, and I don't think it should be used as a political ploy," she said. "I saw it being used just as something out there to symbolize his support for the evangelical community, and it shouldn't be used in that way. People should have more respect for Scripture."

York said that he, personally, would not ask a politician to sign a Bible, but that he has been asked to sign Bibles after he preaches. It feels awkward, he said, but he doesn't refuse. "If it's meaningful to them to have signatures in their Bible, I'm willing to do that," he said.

A request for comment was left with the White House on Saturday, a day after Trump

tients in jeopardy.

Deaths must still be reported in MAUDE. But the hidden database has included serious injury and malfunction reports for about 100 medical devices, according to the FDA, many implanted in patients or used



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

President Donald Trump signs a Bible as he greets people at Providence Baptist Church in Smiths Station, Ala., on Friday.

visited Alabama to survey the devastation from a deadly tornado victims.

The tornado carved a path of destruction nearly a mile wide, killing 23 people, including four children and a couple in their 80s, with 10 victims belonging to a single extended family.

In photos from the visit, Trump is shown signing the cover of a Bible.

Trump should have at least signed inside in a less ostentatious way, said the Rev. Dr. Kevin Cassidy-Maloney.

"It just felt like hubris," said Cassidy-Maloney, pastor at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Fargo, N.D. "It almost felt like a desecration of the holy book to put his signature on the front right large, literally."

Southern storms, apparent tornadoes cause damage; no one injured

Associated Press

Two apparent tornadoes touched down Saturday in central Arkansas, destroying shops as severe storms raking the South damaged some buildings and tore away roofs in northeast Mississippi.

There were no reports of any deaths or injuries from the widespread storms, which came about a week after a large tornado killed 23 people in Alabama amid an outbreak of Southern twisters.

An apparent tornado touched down Saturday afternoon near Carlisle, about 30 miles east of Little Rock, and the second storm was near the unincorporated community of Slovak, southeast of Carlisle, said National Weather Service meteorologist Joe Goudswaard.

Prairie County, Ark., Sheriff Rick Hickman said several buildings were destroyed, power lines were brought down and at least one home was damaged.

"It was more than straight-line winds.

One of the shops, it had debris strewn over 2 miles; one of them was just twisted in a big twist with metal on top of automobiles that were in there," Hickman said.

Goudswaard, based with the weather service in Little Rock, said teams would be sent to assess the damage and determine the strength of those storms.

In northeast Mississippi, strong winds tore away roofs and pulled down bricks from some buildings in the small community of Walnut, population about 3,000.

Emergency Management Director Tom Lindsey, for the region's Tippah County, said the area that was hit was very rural.

Weather service meteorologist Marlene Mickelson, in Memphis, Tenn., said there were no reports of injuries from the storm in Walnut. But authorities said it was still too early to tell if the damage there was caused by a tornado or by straight-line winds.

NATION

US aid just trickles in

Federal government fights with Puerto Rico over every dollar after Hurricane Maria

By YALIXA RIVERA
AND JONATHAN LEVIN
Bloomberg

Seventeen months after Hurricane Maria, the remote Puerto Rican island of Vieques is still waiting on federal money to rebuild its hospital.

It won't arrive in time to give Zuleima Nieves peace of mind.

She and Vieques' other 9,000 residents depend on a makeshift clinic in a former storm shelter and three trailers for dialysis, dentistry and basic care. But Nieves, 22, who has hyperthyroidism, is about six months into a high-risk pregnancy and must travel to San Juan every two weeks for checkups. When labor pains arrive, it's time to race to the "big island."

"If something happens here in Vieques, they won't be able to care for me," said Nieves, a lifelong resident of the former U.S. Navy outpost about 8 miles east of mainland Puerto Rico.

Diana Rivas, 60, a cancer patient in remission, said some fellow sufferers chose to die rather than spend days journeying for chemotherapy and radiation. Patients must wake at 4 a.m., take an hourlong ferry and then be driven two hours into San Juan.

The ferries can be unreliable; in early March, the breakdown of two vessels disrupted cargo transport, prompting the governor to activate the National Guard to deliver food and medicine.

"If you want to save your own life, you have to travel to the big island and pray that nothing happens on the way there," Rivas said.

Across the commonwealth, citizens are struggling as a projected \$55 billion in aid arrives at a trickle and the White House falters in its support of rebuilding.

Last week, President Donald Trump promised "the A Plus treatment" for residents of tornado-torn Alabama, a state where he enjoys strong support. But he has opposed future help for Puerto Rico and falsely claimed that the bankrupt island wanted to use aid to pay its more than \$70 billion debt. Recently, the White House even considered raising recovery funds allocated by Congress to pay for a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Maria killed an estimated 3,000 people in the months after its September 2017 landfall, which leveled homes and businesses and wiped out electricity. So far, the commonwealth has identified 7,505 rebuilding sites and delivered 4,792 reports to the Federal Emergency Management Agency seeking major repairs. Only 67 projects are proceeding, according to Puerto Rico's government. In a similar period after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the last U.S. hurricane approaching Maria's magnitude, more than 9,000 were underway.

FEMA is sending \$2.95 billion to individual Puerto Ricans and has designated \$5.43 billion to so-called public assistance, rebuilding government infrastructure and services. But the lion's share of the latter was for help in the storm's immediate aftermath: \$4.24 billion on "emergency protective measures," an umbrella category led by \$1.89 billion to restore the rickety energy grid to minimal function.



CARLOS GIUSTI/AP

National Guard barges dock at the former Roosevelt Roads military base, close to the Maritime Transport Authority facilities in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, early Thursday. On Wednesday, National Guard boats carried food, water and gasoline to the tiny islands of Vieques and Culebra after the governor activated troops on Tuesday due to a breakdown of two ferries that carry supplies.



PHOTOS BY XAVIER GARCIA/AP

Hurricane Maria damage left homes and the hospital abandoned in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Only \$371.3 million is going to what FEMA calls "permanent work" — restoring infrastructure and facilities to pre-disaster levels. Of that, only \$35 million has actually been disbursed, mostly for roads and bridges.

The commonwealth blames a requirement that FEMA control disbursements, unlike mainland jurisdictions where local officials do. The agency, led by soon-to-depart Brock Long, says the system guards against misspending by a dysfunctional government.

"FEMA makes it very easy to get money," said Justo Hernandez, FEMA's deputy federal coordinating officer for Puerto Rico. But, he said, the agency is proceeding deliberately to ensure the commonwealth

doesn't get in trouble. "FEMA gets blamed for everything."

Puerto Rico has been treated differently from the outset. A University of Michigan report in the BMJ Global Health journal studied critical periods after Maria, Hurricane Irma in Florida and Hurricane Harvey in Texas. The federal government took 30 times as long in Puerto Rico to achieve Florida's staffing rates, it found. And 30 days after Maria, only \$116.3 million federal dollars were in survivors' pockets, compared with \$1.09 billion in Texas and \$847 million in Florida.

"We need to go to the root cause, which is Puerto Rico is a colonial territory of the U.S.," Gov. Ricardo Rossello said in an interview last month in Washington. "It's al-

ways going to be a powerlessness issue."

Omar Marrero, executive director of Puerto Rico's Central Office of Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency, described endless debate over the cost and scope of projects — including what constitutes a project in the first place. A proposal was drawn up for each site, but FEMA wants a proposal for each subtask, he said, effectively creating a sixfold increase.

Puerto Rico has been chasing money for the Vieques hospital since weeks after the storm, Marrero said. FEMA first planned a new structure for \$26 million, an estimate that rose to \$57 million. Then, the agency proposed \$1 million merely to rehabilitate the original building, he said. FEMA's Hernandez said a 20-member team finished a final assessment in January, and an independent panel will decide this month.

Nieves, the woman awaiting her first child, said she's starting to think it might be time to leave her lifelong home.

"I'm here for now, but if things get bad or I feel something, I'm heading to San Juan," she said. "I'm not putting myself or the life of my baby at risk."

‘We need to go to the root cause, which is Puerto Rico is a colonial territory of the U.S. It's always going to be a powerlessness issue.’

Ricardo Rossello
governor of Puerto Rico

NATION

Kavanaugh, Barr: Presidents should be held culpable

By DEANNA PAUL
The Washington Post

Since taking control of the House, Democrats have launched a series of wide-ranging investigations of President Donald Trump, his campaign, his administration and even his family business operations. Republicans in Congress have criticized this as just an effort to disrupt the Trump presidency and covering the same ground as special counsel Robert Mueller III's Russia probe. But Democrats actually are doing something two of Trump's most prominent nominees have advocated: conducting their own investigation.

During the Kenneth Starr-led investigation into Bill Clinton's affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, Brett Kavanaugh and William Barr argued that waiting on the counsel's report would be an abdication of Congress' constitutional duty. Both men unequivocally supported rigorous congressional oversight apart from — or perhaps even instead of — a counsel investigation. But with Trump in office, Republicans have spent two years defying their own key nominees' words.

"When Congress learns of a serious allegation against a president, it must quickly determine whether the president is to remain in office," Kavanaugh wrote in a Washington Post article, "First Let Congress Do its Job," dated Feb. 26, 1999.

Kavanaugh, then a top lawyer for the Starr investigation, was averse to both a badly behaved president and the Independent Counsel Statute. For Congress to sit idly and defer to the counsel's investigation, he said, is "not what the Constitution contemplated."

There simply was no need for this mess to have occupied the country for 13 months," suggested Kavanaugh, because Congress could have must have "gotten to the truth."

In a March 1998 article published by American Spectator, Kavanaugh, now a Supreme Court justice, wrote that "If elected, Congress is the entity constitutionally assigned to determine whether the president should remain in office, it follows that a congressional inquiry should take precedence over a criminal investigation of the president."

Kavanaugh added: "It is more important for Congress to determine whether the president has committed impeachable offenses or otherwise acted in a manner inconsistent with the presidency than for any individual to be criminally prosecuted and sentenced to a few years in prison."

Like Kavanaugh, Barr — the recently confirmed attorney general — once expressed dissatisfaction with Congress' shrinking role in presidential investigations.

"I would like to see the watchdog institutions we have in society step up and perform the primary role they are supposed to, not let the independent counsel handle everything," he said during a 1999 congressional hearing. "And then continue vigorous oversight both by Congress and the press."

Kavanaugh and Barr's late-1990s statements were made in the context of the Independent Counsel statute, not current special counsel regulations. The statute was allowed to expire in 1999 and was not replaced. Unlike Starr, Mueller gets his power, jurisdiction and protection from Justice Department rules, not a statute.

At times, a counsel's investigation and a congressional oversight committee can overlap, but each has its own boundaries, said attorney Jonathan Meyer, a partner at Sheppard Mullin who has experience with both types of investigations. Neither, he said, has unlimited power or jurisdiction.

"The Committee is limited by constitutional issues," he said, like separation of powers and balance of powers between the branches of government. Meyer also noted that there are limits to the information an oversight committee can obtain.

Unlike a special or independent counsel, which investigates allegations of criminal activity, Congress's role is much broader, House Oversight and Reform Committee Chairman Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., said in a statement to The Post. It also investigates waste, fraud, abuse, inefficiency and duplication with an eye toward reforming existing laws or writing new ones.

"The Oversight Committee is the primary investigative body of Congress, and our job is to ensure that the same requirements of transparency and accountability that have applied to every other administration apply to this one," he said.

The role of the oversight committee is multifaceted, Meyer said. It acts as a check and balance on other government branches. To the extent there is wrongdoing in the executive branch, even if it may not rise to the level of criminal prosecution, it also acts as a watchdog.

Justice Department guidelines suggest a sitting president cannot be indicted, making impeachment and oversight hearings the only way to pursue law enforcement action against a president.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

President Donald Trump speaks in the Oval Office of the White House on Wednesday.

Washington seems to have no interest in ballooning deficit

By ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The federal budget deficit is ballooning on President Donald Trump's watch and few in Washington seem to care.

And even if they did, the political dynamics that enabled bipartisan deficit-cutting deals decades ago has disappeared, replaced by bitter partisanship and chronic dysfunction.

That's the reality that will greet Trump's latest budget, which will promptly be shelved after landing with a thud on Monday. Like previous spending blueprints, Trump's plan for the 2020 budget year will propose cuts to many domestic programs favored by lawmakers in both parties but leave alone politically popular retirement programs such as Medicare and Social Security.

Washington probably will devote months to wrestling over-erasing the last remnants of a failed 2011 budget deal that would otherwise cut core Pentagon operations by \$71 billion and

domestic agencies and foreign aid by \$55 billion. Top lawmakers are pushing for a reprise of three prior deals to use spending cuts or new revenues and prop up additional spending rather than defray deficits that are again approaching \$1 trillion.

It's put deficit hawks in a gloomy mood.

"The president doesn't care. The leadership of the Democratic Party doesn't care," said former Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H. "And social media is in stampede mode."

Trump's budget arrives as the latest Treasury Department figures show a 77 percent spike in the deficit over the first four months of the budget year, driven by falling revenues and steady growth in spending.

Trump's 2017 tax cut bears much of the blame, along with sharp increases in spending for both the Pentagon and domestic agencies and the growing federal retirement costs of the baby boom generation. Promises that the tax cut would stir so much economic growth that it would

mostly pay for itself have been proved wrong.

Trump's upcoming budget, however, won't address any of the main factors behind the growing, intractable deficits that have driven the U.S. debt above \$22 trillion. Its most striking proposed cuts — to domestic agency operations — were rejected when tea party Republicans controlled the House, and they face equally grim prospects now that Democrats are in the majority.

Trump has given no indication he's much interested in the deficit, and he's rejected any idea of curbing Medicare or Social Security, the massive federal retirement programs whose imbalances are the chief deficit drivers.

The deficit registered \$714 billion during Trump's first year in office but is projected to hit about \$900 billion this year, according to the Congressional Budget Office, which says Trump's tax cut will add \$1.5 trillion to the deficit over 10 years.

Roy Moore may run for Ala. Senate seat

By DEANNA PAUL
The Washington Post

Sen. Doug Jones, D-Ala., may face Roy Moore, his 2017 Republican special election opponent, for a second time in Alabama's 2020 U.S. Senate race.

Moore announced during a Friday interview on American Family Radio he is "seriously considering" a run in the upcoming election, Reuters reported.

Moore claimed his 2017 seat was stolen by a Democrat-waged disinformation campaign.

"I think that's been pronounced

in the national newspapers — the New York Times, The Washington Post even — has recognized there was a disinformation campaign going on in September of 2017 by forces outside of Alabama that spent a lot of money not regulated by the FEC in trying to dissuade Republicans from voting and encourage and enrage Democrats," he said to "Focal Point" host Bryan Fischer.

The special election of 2017 arose after Jeff Sessions vacated the seat to become President Donald Trump's attorney general. Moore lost the election to

Democrat Jones, a former federal prosecutor, by a small margin.

Moore's loss came after his campaign was marred by allegations of misconduct. A month before the election, The Washington Post reported four women accused the former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court of sexually pursuing them as teenagers, when he was in his 30s.

The upset flipped conservative-leaning Alabama, making Jones the first Democrat elected to the Senate seat in decades.

Jones' term ends in 2020, when he will seek re-election.

NATION

More US terrorism-related arrests domestic, data show

By DEVILIN BARRETT
The Washington Post

Most people arrested as the result of FBI terrorism investigations are charged with nonterrorism offenses, and more domestic terrorism suspects were arrested last year than those allegedly inspired by international terrorist groups, according to internal FBI figures reviewed by The Washington Post.

As government officials and activists debate the best way to pursue violent extremists, the figures show how much of counterterrorism work goes unclassified and unnoticed. Thousands are investigated each year. Hundreds are charged with crimes. But the public and the media see only dozens.

The debate centers on whether federal law and law enforcement are too focused on Islamic terrorism and not paying enough attention to the rise in far right-wing extremism. In fact, according to the data, more domestic terrorist targets are being charged, and in both categories, law enforcement often leverage simpler crimes, such as violations of gun or drug laws, to prevent violence.

"It's violence that we key in on," said a senior law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive federal investigative work. "And sometimes, it's the violence that motivates someone more than any particular ideology."

The arrest last month of Coast Guard Lt. Christopher Hasson, 49, is the latest example of this pattern. Prosecutors have alleged Hasson is a white nationalist inspired in part by mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, who in 2011 unleashed two attacks in Norway that killed 77 people.

Hasson, who has been detained since his arrest, is accused of amassing weapons as part of a domestic terrorism plot targeting politicians and journalists. Authorities have highlighted a letter in which he allegedly wrote, "I am dreaming of a way to kill almost every last person on the earth."

But as with most people arrested in FBI counterterrorism investigations, Hasson does not yet face terrorism charges. Rather, he was indicted on charges of illegal possession of firearm silencers, possession of firearms by a drug addict and unlawful user, and possession of a controlled substance.

According to FBI figures shared with The Post, in the 2017 budget year there were about 110 people arrested after being investigated for actions inspired by foreign terrorist groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaida. Of those, about 30 faced terrorism charges. The rest faced gun, drug, fraud or immigration charges.

Last year, out of about 100 such arrests, only nine defendants faced terrorism charges—a drop-off owed in part to a decline in the number of people attempting to travel overseas to join ISIS, the se-

‘Sometimes, it’s the violence that motivates someone more than any particular ideology.’

Senior law enforcement official
on condition of anonymity

nior law enforcement official said. Because federal law does not designate domestic groups as terrorist organizations, no corresponding terrorism crimes apply to such suspects. While the number of such arrests fell last year, the senior law enforcement official emphasized that, overall, more domestic terrorism suspects are being arrested.

About one in four counterterrorism arrests are made by state and local authorities — not the FBI, the senior law enforcement official said.

Seamus Hughes, deputy director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, said the figures explain how counterterrorism work is done.

"You're going to arrest someone with whatever charges you have to negate the threat. The FBI doesn't need to pad stats on terrorism if it means getting a terrorist off the streets," Hughes said.

With Hasson, the absence of terrorism charges could have a significant effect on how his case is handled. At a court hearing last month in Maryland, the judge, Charles Day, said it would be unusual to detain someone without bail based on the gun and drug charges Hasson faces now. He has not yet entered a plea.

Prosecutors have labeled Hasson a "domestic terrorist" who planned to murder innocent civilians. His lawyer, Julie Stelzig, said the government's description is "histrionic" and that there was "no actual indication of any plan."

It's not a crime to think negative thoughts. It's not a crime to think about doomsday scenarios."

A case in Tucson, Ariz., similarly highlights the complicated factors prosecutors must weigh before filing terrorism charges. In April 2017, Ahmad Sahad Ahmad was the focus of an intense FBI undercover operation. Ahmad, who allegedly bragged to a government informant about the bombmaking skills he developed in his native Iraq, was taken to a Las Vegas condominium by an undercover FBI agent posing as a member of a Mexican drug cartel who wanted to kill an enemy, according to court records.

Prosecutors say that once in the condo, Ahmad assembled a bomb using materials he brought and others supplied by the undercover agent. Authorities charge that Ahmad also showed the undercover agent how to build a bomb, but those devices did not contain real explosives.

Two months later, Ahmad, 30, was arrested, jailed and charged with violating his parole for an

unrelated drug charge. He was released in September and rearrested a month later on two federal drug charges and two counts of distributing information related to explosives.

The second arrest came after a lengthy internal debate among Justice Department and FBI officials over whether the evidence supported terrorism charges, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

At a court hearing late last year, U.S. Magistrate Judge Eric Markovitch noted an apparent contradiction in the government's case — that the suspect prosecutors argued was too dangerous to release on bail had been free for months after the FBI's undercover sting. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Hakala insisted that Ahmad "was being very closely monitored" after the alleged bomb-building trip to Las Vegas.



COURTESY OF WNBC-TV News 4 New York/AP

Emergency medical personnel tend to an injured passenger from a Turkish Airlines flight at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport on Saturday.

Turbulence injures 30 people on flight from Istanbul to New York

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Severe turbulence tossed terrified passengers and crew around a Turkish Airlines plane cabin as it passed over Maine on Saturday, with 30 people suffering bumps, bruises, cuts and one a broken leg before the flight landed safely at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, officials said.

Dozens of ambulances lined up in front of a terminal to quickly treat the injured coming off the flight that left Istanbul for the 10-hour trip.

Turkish Airlines Flight 1 hit the turbulence about 45 minutes before landing at JFK, said spokesman Steve Coleman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The crew declared an emergency while the Boeing 777 was still in the air, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

"Nobody announced it or any-

thing like that so we figured out something was wrong," passenger Sead Nikaj told ABC News. "Then I see people start flying on the plane. Then seeing blood all over."

"I had one of the ladies next to me, she really fell down from her seat on the floor and all her back was completely bloody," Nikaj said.

"There was like one or two seconds when it was subtle, but then it really started to pick up," Passenger Amir Mehrbakhsh said. "Just because the drop was so sudden, a lot of people got lifted up and hit their head either on the ceiling or on the side of the plane, and so there were a lot of injuries pretty quickly."

Turkish Airlines said in a statement it is "deeply saddened by this unfortunate experience, and closely monitors the health status of injured passengers, and is making resources available to them."

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A DOCUMENTATION OF THE U.S. FORCES' RELIEF EFFORTS.

NATION

Gangland reporters fill a neglected news area

By MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Shawn Cotton no longer drives his \$55,000, bright pink Corvette to work because he's afraid it could get him killed like his friend. But there are two things he won't leave home without — his bulletproof vest and the 9 mm pistol he slips into his pocket.

Cotton, 28, quit his \$7-an-hour job cleaning refrigerators at a big-box store six years ago to enter a new and uniquely dangerous field of newsgathering in which video journalists interview street gangs and rappers in high-crime areas, then post the videos on YouTube channels.

Dozens of gangland videographers like him nationwide risk their lives to provide a voice for communities routinely ignored by mainstream media, creating an alternative news genre that Cotton's friend Zack Stoner liked to call "hood CNN" before he was killed in a drive-by shooting last year in Chicago.

Stoner, known by his nickname ZackTV, was a trailblazer in the genre and considered a mentor by gangland reporters around the country. His still-unresolved slaying exposed an ominous side to their line of reporting, where gun violence is a recurring theme, and showed how vulner-

able these newsgatherers are.

Cotton said about the impact of Stoner's death, "Now, I think every day about getting shot."

Only after Stoner was killed did he begin arming himself and seeking to keep a lower profile when gathering content for his Say Cheese channel. That means not driving the car in the conspicuous color into gang territories, lest he makes it easier for gangs angered by his reporting to track him.

Other top channels in the genre include Chicago World News, HoodVlogs in Los Angeles and Detroit's CharlieBo313. When it comes to his channel, Cotton said, his subscribers often dictate where he travels, encouraging him to cover specific gangs or rappers locked in escalating disputes.

Reports often show members waving guns and cash, or flashing rival gang signs upside down — a recognized indication of disdain.

Critics say the channels glorify gang life and provide a platform — alongside other social media — for gangs to taunt each other, thus stoking violence.

Defenders say the channels fill a neglected news niche, telling important human interest stories that aren't a priority for traditional media and telling them from places where those outlets are often afraid to go.



JOHN L. MONE/AP

Video blogger Shawn Cotton, left, poses on Dec. 27 with rapper Wayne Walker, who performs under the stage name 30 Rich, after Cotton interviewed Walker for his YouTube channel "Say Cheese TV" in Fort Worth, Texas.

"What Zack provided was a platform where [those on the streets thought], 'I can be myself, I can cuss, I can tell you how I feel ... and it ain't gonna be censored,'" said Rodney Phillips, an ex-gang member who works for Chicago anti-violence groups. "He was showing the unadulterated truth."

Stoner once described how he would always conduct interviews with a camera in one hand and a gun within reach of the other.

"I've been taking this chance with my life," he said on video, pulling a handgun

from his coat pocket. "You just gotta be prepared."

Stoner understood, as does Cotton, that some degree of danger makes more compelling videos, boosting viewership. With its homicide numbers and depth of hip-hop talent, Chicago is fertile ground for stories.

After what happened to Stoner, Cotton mulled leaving the field of gangland news. But he still likes the work and the money.

"I'm not going to switch careers just because I'm scared," Cotton said.

R. Kelly: 'We're going to straighten all this stuff out'

By DEN BABWIN
AND TERESA CRAWFORD
Associated Press

CHICAGO — R. Kelly walked out of a Chicago jail on Saturday after someone who officials said did not want to be publicly identified paid \$161,633 that the R&B singer owed in back child support.

Kelly, who was ordered taken into custody on Wednesday by a judge after Kelly said he didn't have the entire amount he owed, briefly spoke with reporters, telling them, "I promise you, we're going to straighten all this stuff out."

He said that was all he could say, a stark contrast to a nationally televised broadcast that aired earlier in the week in which he cried and ranted about being

"assassinated" by allegations of sexual abuse that led to criminal charges last month.

Cara Smith, the chief policy officer for the Cook County Sheriff's Office, which runs the jail, said a person who wished to remain anonymous handed a check on Saturday morning to the county clerk's office for the full amount of Kelly's back child support. A bond slip where people putting up money to secure an inmate's release write their names and relationship to the inmate was left blank, Smith said.

Kelly's attorney, Steve Greenberg, said he could not discuss the child support payment because of a judge's gag order in that case.

As is done with other high-profile inmates, Kelly, 52, was held in a solo cell under round-the-clock observation.

It was his second trip to jail in a matter of weeks and the second time a person has stepped up with money to get Kelly out of jail.

Last month, after he was charged with 10 counts of aggravated sexual abuse pertaining to three girls and a woman, he was taken to the same jail. Kelly, who the attorney said at the time that the singer's finances were in disarray, then spent a weekend in jail before a 47-year-old suburban Chicago business owner posted his \$100,000 bail.

Greenberg told reporters Saturday that Kelly's attorneys "haven't seen one piece of evidence."

"When we get those things, we're going to fight this case like we fight any other case, in the courtroom, based on the evidence," he said.



PAUL BEATY/AP

Singer R. Kelly, left, walks with his attorney, Steve Greenberg, after being released from Cook County Jail in Chicago on Saturday.

Wash. House OKs steps toward year-round daylight saving time

By RACHEL LA CORTE
Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — As daylight saving time takes effect in most of the U.S. this weekend, the Washington House passed a measure Saturday that would make those later sunsets permanent in the state all year — if Congress allows it.

The measure passed the chamber on an 89-7 vote and now heads to the Senate, which has its own bill on the topic. The vote comes as more than two dozen states are

considering measures to avoid the twice-yearly clock change.

Both the Senate and House measures would take effect only if Congress passes legislation allowing states to observe daylight saving time year-round. Currently, it is observed from the second Sunday in March until the first Sunday in November.

Democratic Rep. Marcus Riccelli, of Spokane, cited safety and health reasons among the reasons he sponsored the measure. "It's time to hashtag ditch

the switch, bring the light and put Washington at the forefront of this movement," he said during debate before the vote.

At least 26 states are considering legislation related to the practice of changing clocks twice a year, including the three West Coast states, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

That's the most number of states with bills on the issue since the group started tracking the topic five years ago, said Jim Reed,

who has been following daylight saving bills for the conference.

Florida passed a similarly conditional measure last year. Last week, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, and U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, both of Florida, introduced measures to make daylight saving time permanent nationwide.

In November, California voters passed a ballot measure to permit the state Legislature to establish daylight saving time year-round if federal law changes. A bill was introduced there a month after

the election.

While federal law allows states to opt into standard time permanently — which Hawaii and Arizona have done — the reverse is prohibited and requires Congressional action.

Reed said while about half the states are seeking to move to permanent daylight saving time, like Washington and California, about half have bills to adopt permanent standard time. Oregon is considering measures for both approaches.

NATION

Hear the one about Johns Hopkins stand-up?

Looking to expand horizons, students take comedy class

By SUSAN SVRLUGA
The Washington Post

BALTIMORE — Jesse Huang took a deep breath, holding his hands over his eyes. Then, too nervous to sit still, he jumped up and danced through a row of auditorium seats.

Within the hour, hundreds of Johns Hopkins University students would be crowding in, filling all the seats, sitting in the aisles and leaning against the walls to watch him and his classmates take a shot at stand-up comedy.

Isaac Bernstein sat with his head down and his earbuds in, trying to stave off panic. A computer-science major was practicing his routine by talking into a Snapple bottle as though it were a mic, reciting poetry with a thick Irish brogue.

A pre-med student paced at the front of the room, gesturing and muttering jokes about his dad who never learned to swim in India: "You're not drowning. The water's only three feet deep. Stand up!"

This is the 15th year Adam Ruben has brought stand-up comedy to campus. It's the quintessential winter session class at Johns Hopkins. For three weeks, students step away from the intensity of their academic majors, forget about their grade-point averages and take a class for the sheer joy of it.

The stakes are incredibly low — the grading is pass-fail, and most of the class time is spent listening to jokes. And yet for some, this class will present by far the most daunting challenge of their academic career. At the end of three weeks, each student will take the spotlight in front of hundreds, perhaps 1,000, people, grab the microphone and try to make the crowd laugh.

"This is scary," said Charlie Linton, a senior.

The very real possibility of absolute failure in the show swiftly forged a closeness in the class as they practiced.

"We're a bunch of Hopkins nerds who want to do well in this show," he said.

They're incredibly different from one another, with such a range of ethnicities, interests, personalities and reasons for being there that, yes, they suggest the setup for a joke if they all were to walk into a bar.

Maybe because of that range, the class strikes deeply at some of the most difficult issues on college campuses today. While some professional comedians have sold colleges can be too politically correct for stand-up shows, these students didn't shy away from incendiary issues.

Many of their jokes hinged on the issue of identity, and that are both defining and polarizing.



Adam Ruben, the stand-up comedy instructor, speaks to his students about his routines on Jan. 22 in Gilman Hall on the Johns Hopkins University Homewood campus in Baltimore.

PHOTOS BY CALLA KESSLER, THE WASHINGTON POST/AP



Usman Inam, a junior from Pakistan, practices his stand-up comedy routine.

They took on religion, culture, sexuality, race.

Akshat Gupta, a student from India, talked about bumbling through American idioms, unsure of what people were really saying. A bipolar student made jokes about his diagnosis, a public health major from New Mexico laughed about her overly demanding Asian mother, a senior revealed he had just changed his name and his gender.

The students have little in common except the intellect and work ethic that got them into Hopkins. Most say their friends would not describe them as funny.

"They say I'm very serious," Bernstein said. "Too serious, sometimes."

They had three weeks to prepare. Four minutes to be funny.

Ruben started the stand-up comedy class — teaching this perhaps unteachable thing, how to be funny — when he was a graduate student studying molecular biology at Hopkins.

"I think it's essential," he said of comedy.

Even as a child, he found humor a particularly effective and memorable way to communicate ideas. Instead of writing book reports in elementary school, he made up

'We're a bunch of Hopkins nerds who want to do well in this show.'

Charlie Linton
senior at Johns Hopkins

videos or game shows to present in class. It was easier than talking to other kids at lunch.

Now, he's on TV and writes books and a regular humor column for the journal *Science*. He does stand-up — when he's not at work, most recently helping develop a vaccine for malaria. (Seriously.)

In class, Ruben shows clips of professional comedians and talks about the structure and mechanics of a successful routine. They analyze flops. Students answer questions designed to prompt thinking about possible material. Then, they have to test their jokes.

"You show up and there's a microphone in the middle of the room," said Luke Sand, a former student who upended his academic major and his career path — which has included working for "Saturday Night Live" and writing for a TV series — after taking the class.

"To make 13 people laugh who are nervous about presenting their own work — it's basically impossible," Sand said.

The idea of doing terribly in class is just about everyone's worst nightmare at the school. But to do stand-up well requires the will to withstand an unresponsive crowd, the self-awareness to recognize when jokes aren't working.

"An opportunity to fail," Sand said, "is the most important thing."

In the final week before the performance, Ruben told his students in his classroom, "There are 72 hours before the show."

When some cried out in alarm, he pretended to be reassuring. "Well, 72 hours and 20 minutes."

Most people tried to avoid Ruben's gaze when he asked for volunteers to deliver their routines to their classmates.

Bernstein — who first signed up for the class as a freshman because one of his goals in college was to be less socially awkward — asked to go early, before stage fright destroyed him.

Many of his classmates' hands were shaking as they reached for the mic.

Ruben had told them all to be supportive, and kind, and to one another, but that the feedback should be 90 percent criticism and 10 percent praise. It's the criticism, he said, that will help you improve.

"I think you've got about 75 percent of the first jokes, and you need to finish them," Ruben told an economics major.

He checked the stopwatch on his phone after another routine and told the student it had taken five minutes and 30 seconds.

"I think you can cut everything you have down to two minutes. Be ruthless."

He noted that white people and pre-meds were themes for jokes this year. He encouraged a student to amplify her chipmunk noises when she was describing a particularly large gathering of chipmunks.

He doesn't tell them to avoid sensitive topics or language, just lets them know the risks — of offending people, distracting attention from the joke.

Most of all, he repeated the advice he gave to Linton: "A lot of these jokes, bring it down to one line. Be brutal."

Sixty-eight hours to go.

On Friday night — THE Friday night — as his class was melting down in the final minutes before the show, Ruben reminded them to hold the mic close, to look at the audience, to stay near the front.

"Have fun," he told them, then said it into the mic in an amplified, stand-up-comedian voice that made them laugh: "Have fun."

Four classmates hugged. Huang hopped up and down. A sophomore from Texas changed from sneakers into strappy heels.

A few minutes after 8, the lights dimmed in the packed auditorium. Ruben introduced the show with some jokes, making fun of the school's intimidating mascot, a blue jay: "Watch out, we might tip our heads to the side and chirp pleasantly."

Usman Enam, a molecular biologist from Pakistan, said, "I'm brown." Pause. "I'm Muslim." Pause. "I culturally identify as a terrorist." The crowd cracked up.

At the end of the show, Ruben summoned his students back to the spotlight, and they held one another close, beaming, as the crowd cheered.

WORLD



YONK KIRUBEL/AP

Rescuers search through wreckage at the scene where an Ethiopian Airlines flight crashed shortly after takeoff at Hejere, near Bishoftu, some 31 miles south of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Sunday.

Jetliner crashes in Ethiopia; 157 from 35 countries dead

By ELIAS MESERER

Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — A jetliner carrying 157 people crashed shortly after takeoff from the Ethiopian capital Sunday, killing everyone aboard, authorities said. At least 35 nationalities were among the dead.

It was not clear what caused the Ethiopian Airlines plane to go down in clear weather. But the accident was strikingly similar to last year's crash of a Lion Air jet that plunged into the Java Sea, killing 189 people. Both crashes involved the Boeing 737 Max 8, and both happened minutes after the jets became airborne.

The Ethiopian pilot sent out a distress call and was given clearance to return to the airport, the airline's CEO told reporters.

Worried families gathered at the flight's destination, the airport in Nairobi, the capital of neighboring Kenya.

Agnes Muluu said he came to pick up his brother. "I just pray that he is safe or he was not on it," he said.

Relatives were frustrated by the lack of information about loved ones.

"Why are they taking us round and round. It is all over the news that the plane crashed," said Edwin Ong'undi, who was waiting for his sister. "All we are asking for is information to know about their fate."

The accident is likely to renew questions about the 737 Max, the newest version of Boeing's popular single-aisle airliner.

Indonesian investigators have not determined a cause for the October crash, but days after the accident, Boeing sent a notice to airlines that faulty information from a sensor could cause the plane to automatically point the nose down. The notice reminded pilots of the procedure for handling such a situation.

The Lion Air cockpit data recorder showed that the jet's airspeed indicator had malfunctioned on its last four flights, though the



MULUGETA AYENI/AP

Family members of the victims react at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.

The number killed by nationality

Here is the latest list of nationalities as released by the airline. It accounts for the nationalities of 150 of the 157 people believed to have been on board:

Kenya, 32; Canada, 18; Ethiopia, 9; China, 8; Italy, 8; United States, 8; France, 7; U.K., 7; Egypt, 6; Germany, 5; India, 4; Slovakia, 4; Austria, 3; Russia, 3; Sweden, 3;

Spain, 2; Israel, 2; Morocco, 2; Poland, 2; Belgium, 1; Djibouti, 1; Indonesia, 1; Ireland, 1; Mozambique, 1; Norway, 1; Rwanda, 1; Saudi Arabia, 1; Sudan, 1; Somalia, 1; Serbia, 1; Togo, 1; Uganda, 1; Yemen, 1; Nepal, 1; Nigeria, 1; U.N. passport, 1.

— Associated Press

airline initially said problems with the aircraft had been fixed before it left the Indonesian capital of Jakarta.

Safety experts cautioned against drawing too many comparisons between the two crashes until more is known about Sunday's disaster.

The Ethiopian Airlines CEO "stated there were no defects prior to the flight, so it is hard to see any parallels with the Lion Air crash yet," said Harro Ranter, founder of the Aviation Safety Network, which compiles information about accidents worldwide.

As sunset approached at the crash site, searchers and a bulldozer picked through the wreck-

age of the plane, which shattered into small pieces.

Photos from the scene showed multicolored pieces of the jet strewn across freshly churned earth. Red Cross teams and others were searching a large area for human remains. In one photo, teams could be seen loading black plastic bags into trucks.

The airline published a photo showing its CEO standing in the wreckage.

The Ethiopian plane was new, having been delivered to the airline in November.

State-owned Ethiopian Airlines is widely considered the best-managed airline in Africa and calls itself Africa's largest carrier.

N. Koreans go to polls to vote for next legislature

Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea — Millions of North Korean voters, including leader Kim Jong Un, went to the polls on Sunday to elect a new lineup of roughly 700 members for the next session of the national legislature, though the vote was more of an endorsement than a competitive contest.

Voters were presented with just one state-sanctioned candidate per seat and cast their ballots not to select but rather to show their approval or, at least theoretically, disapproval of that candidate.

The elections, last held in 2014, are for the entire Supreme People's Assembly, which on paper is the highest organ of power in North Korea. Its delegates come from all over the country and are re-elected every five years. The candidates are selected by the ruling Korean Workers' Party and a couple of other, smaller coalition parties that have seats in the assembly.

Kim is a member of the assembly, though his power rests in his complete control over the ruling party, government and military. State media showed footage of him casting his vote at a polling center at Pyongyang's Kim Chaek University of Technology.

As was the custom in the So-

viet Union and other communist countries, turnout is generally reported at 99 percent or higher. Voting is generally regarded as a duty and responsibility. Simply staying at home is not an option.

"I'm very proud to be voting for the first time," said university student Kim Ju Gyong, 19, who cast her vote Sunday morning at the Pyongyang Primary School No. 4 polling station. "I feel happy to be a citizen and I want to do my best for the future of my country."

Under North Korean law, citizens can vote from the age of 17.

Voting begins around 10 a.m., depending on the location, and continues until late evening. Voters show election officials their ID cards to receive their ballot with the sole candidate's name on it, which they cast in a private booth. If they approve, they simply put the ballot in the box. If they don't approve, they cross the name out and put it in the same box.

One official told The Associated Press that basically never happens.

"No one votes against the candidate," said Jin Ki Chol, the chairman of an election committee supervising a polling station at a cable factory in central Pyongyang.

Electric power returns to some parts of Venezuela

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Power has returned to some parts of Venezuela after several days of the country's worst blackouts, but many areas remain without electricity and communications.

The massive outages have compounded the economic and political crisis in Venezuela, where the government and opposition accuse each other of being responsible for the infrastructure breakdown.

President Nicolas Maduro on Sunday tweeted that "multiple cy-

berattacks" caused the blackouts and disrupted efforts to fix the national grid. He said he hopes power can be restored in coming hours.

Opposition leader Juan Guaido and his ally, the United States, say Maduro's allegations that they sabotaged the power system are absurd. They say government corruption and mismanagement caused the decay of Venezuela's infrastructure over many years.

Venezuela is already struggling with hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine.

Iran's president to visit Iraq

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's president is making his first official visit to Iraq this week as he faces mounting pressure from hardliners at home in the wake of the Trump administration's unraveling of the nuclear deal.

Hasan Rouhani's trip — billed as "historic and noble" by his foreign minister — is meant to solidify ties between Shiite power in Iran and Iraq's Shiite-led government, a strong Tehran ally.

It is also Iran's response to President Donald Trump's snap December trip to Iraq and the American president's comments that U.S. forces should stay in Iraq to keep an eye on neighbor-

ing Iran, with which Iraq shares an 870-mile border.

At the time, Trump slipped into Iraq at night without stopping in Baghdad to greet U.S. service members at a base far from the Iraqi capital where he extolled the American troops' fight against Islamic State.

Rouhani later mocked Trump's visit, asserting that flying into Iraq under the cover of darkness meant "defeat" for the U.S. in Iraq and asking the U.S. president why he didn't make an "open and official visit."

"You have to walk in the streets of Baghdad ... to find out how people will welcome you," Rouhani said at the time.

WORLD

US envoy pushes for lifting of tax on Serbia

Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo — A senior U.S. official on Saturday met with top Kosovo leaders in an attempt to persuade the government to revoke or suspend a tariff on Serb goods so dialogue with Belgrade can resume.

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale is the latest U.S. envoy to take part in shuttle diplomacy between Kosovo and Serbia. He met with Kosovo's president, speaker and prime minister at the residence of the U.S. ambassador. A day

earlier, he was in Belgrade.

In an interview with three local newspapers, Hale urged both Belgrade and Pristina to move ahead with the dialogue and reach an agreement acceptable to both countries.

He said Washington had no specific stance, but stressed that U.S. and Western powers would support any deal reached between the two countries.

Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has resisted U.S. calls to suspend the tariff, saying it will be lifted only when Belgrade recognizes Kosovo's

sovereignty and stops preventing it from joining international organizations. Serbia doesn't recognize Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence.

Haradinaj posted a reaction on his Facebook page inviting Serbia to return to the negotiating table and "discuss all open issues, including free trade, and achieve an agreement that will end with the recognition of the existing borders."

Serbia says it won't take part in the European Union-facilitated discussions until the 100 percent

tax is lifted.

Since 2011, the two former warring foes have been in an EU-facilitated dialogue aimed at resolving the long-standing Balkan dispute. Brussels has told both countries they must normalize their ties before they can hope to join the bloc.

Earlier last week, Kosovo's Parliament adopted a negotiating platform for the talks that involve mutual recognition and keeping the current borders intact.

Belgrade responded that this was a rigid platform that dash-

es all hopes for a compromise solution.

Kosovar President Hashim Thaci said Saturday that Belgrade shouldn't condition the dialogue, which should be "comprehensive and transparent."

Thaci said the leaders told Hale that "the status quo and the situation of a frozen conflict are inadmissible."

"All show they are strong but now it is time to see they are smart in achieving their goals," Hale said, according to the Koha Ditore newspaper website.

60 years after Dalai Lama fled, China defends its Tibet policies

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

Associated Press

BEIJING — China is defending its often-criticized rule in Tibet 60 years after the Dalai Lama fled into exile amid an abortive uprising against Chinese control, saying those who question its policies are merely showing their anti-Chinese bias.

The statements in official media came as Tibetans and their supporters marked the anniversary Sunday and called for greater international support.

Despite decades of such calls, however, the Himalayan region appears no closer to gaining greater autonomy, particularly as China's global influence grows.

China's official Xinhua News Agency said in an editorial dated Saturday that economic growth, increases in lifespan and better education in the region refute the claims of critics that Tibetans suffer oppression from Beijing.

On Sunday, an editorial in the Communist Party-run Tibet Daily attacked the

Dalai Lama, Tibet's traditional Buddhist leader, for what it said are his efforts to "sow chaos in Tibet."

His "separatist plots are doomed to total failure," the paper said.

The Dalai Lama has been living in the northern Indian town of Dharmasala since he fled from Tibet after a failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule. Beijing accuses him of seeking to separate Tibet from China, which he denies.

In India's capital, New Delhi, at least 3,000 Tibetans marched about 2 miles through the center of the city Sunday carrying Tibetan and Indian flags. Invoking India's concerns over China's expansive power in Asia and beyond, the marchers shouted slogans including "Tibet's freedom is India's security" and "India-China friendship is a sham."

"We have come here to remind the new generation that China snatched our country... that's why we got together and started this movement," said one marcher, Sonam



ANDY WONG/AP

A Tibetan monk, center, arrives with other delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Sunday.

Yougual, 52.

Hundreds of Tibetans and Taiwanese rallied in Taipei, the capital of the self-governing island democracy that China also claims as its territory.

China has refused to meet with the Dalai Lama or his representatives until they surrender their conditions for a greater degree of autonomy and submit to Beijing's authority unequivocally.

Protests challenge Algerian leader's bid for re-election

Associated Press

ALGIERS, Algeria — Algeria, a gas-rich African giant and crucial western ally nearly brought to its knees in the 1990s by a bloody Islamist insurgency, is at a new turning point, this time led by citizens young and old peacefully protesting against the 20-year rule of ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Last week's protest saw hundreds of thousands of protesters on the streets of the Algerian capital, happily defiant and shouting "Game over" and "The wall of fear has fallen."

No one knows what lies ahead. The powerful military is girding against eventual chaos, while the citizens in the streets across the North African nation are relishing the notion of an Algeria reborn, no longer shackled by the murky system that runs the country alongside the president.

The demonstrations began after Bouteflika, 82, rarely seen in public since a stroke in 2013, announced in a statement Feb. 10 his plan to run for a fifth term in office. Protests snowballed in the following weeks with huge nationwide marches after Friday prayers.

The protests took place while Bouteflika lay in a hospital bed in Geneva undergoing what were described as medical tests. The president, who ap-



TOUFIK DOUDOU/AP

Algerians gather for a demonstration in Algiers on Friday to oppose President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for re-election.

pears partially paralyzed and uses a wheelchair, has undergone numerous periodic checkups. The latest stay has lasted some two weeks.

His official candidacy was filed March 3 in his absence, bolstering detractors' claims that Bouteflika is an unfit candidate for the April 18 election.

In a response to the concerns, a letter said to be from Bouteflika, read by his campaign chief, promised reforms and said he would not complete his term if elected, with a new vote held after a national conference.

The response from his opponents was curt. "Return to sender" read the headline in a commentary on the letter in the daily El Watan.

Former Prime Minister Ali Benflis, who hosted the conclave, is among presidential candidates who have dropped out in protest.

UK official says EU playing games over Brexit proposal

By GREGORY KATZ

Associated Press

LONDON — With tensions escalating, Britain's House of Commons leader said Saturday that European Union officials need to take seriously British proposals for ending the Brexit impasse before a crucial vote in Parliament.

Andrea Leadsom said EU leaders are wrongly accusing Britain of failing to put forward detailed proposals while offering proposed solutions that Britain had rejected months ago because they would threaten ties to Northern Ireland.

She told the BBC she finds it "extraordinary" that EU leaders are being so intransigent and said she is asking herself what "games" the bloc is playing.

Leadsom said the EU is pushing Britain toward a "no-deal" Brexit that would, paradoxically, make it much harder to avoid a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland that both sides

say they are trying to prevent.

Her harsh words and Britain's immediate rejection of a proposal offered Friday by top EU negotiator Michel Barnier signal exasperation as the days dwindle before a make or break vote Tuesday in Britain's Parliament on a deeply unpopular withdrawal plan.

The long-promised "meaningful vote" on the 585-page withdrawal agreement will signal whether Prime Minister Theresa May has managed to win over Parliament after a shocking loss by a 230-vote margin on the same proposal in January.

If Parliament rejects the deal again, lawmakers will vote on whether to leave the EU without an agreement on March 29 — a prospect with little evident support in Parliament — or to ask the EU to delay Brexit beyond the scheduled departure date.

May has also warned that a second defeat to her bill could thwart the Brexit process altogether.

WORLD

‘FORBIDDEN CITY’

Complex in eastern Germany reveals country's complicated military history

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
Associated Press

WZOSSEN, Germany — Borchert ground out a cigarette with his leather boot, zipped up his down jacket and unlocked a rusty door with a sign reading “Do not enter.” He was entering anyway.

Borchert was stepping into the heart of the “forbidden city,” a huge abandoned military complex hidden inside a fenced-off pine forest in eastern Germany.

“The Kaiser, Hitler, the Soviets — all of them were militarily active here, one after the other,” said Borchert, 67, a guide offering tours of the “Haus der Offiziere,” or officers’ complex, in the Wuensdorf neighborhood of Zossen, some 25 miles south of Berlin. He flicks a light switch in the darkness to turn on the cold, fluorescent lamps that light up seemingly endless hallways with numerous rooms branching off to the left and right.

The complex, inaugurated in 1916, has housed the military of German Kaiser Wilhelm II, served as the Nazis’ military command center during World War II and then headquartered the Soviets’ military high command for East Germany during the Cold War.

“This was ‘Little Moscow’ on German ground,” Borchert, who grew up in the area, said during a recent tour. There was a theater, a museum, shopping facilities, a swimming pool and many barracks for about 40,000 soldiers who were stationed here.

“It was the cultural center for the Soviet Army in Germany,” he said.

In 1994, several years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the reunification of Germany and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the last Russian soldiers left the compound, a 2.3-square-mile area enclosed by a 10½-mile-long concrete wall.

The complex is now under the auspices of the state of Brandenburg, but no money has been invested and no new owner has been found. The ravages of time have taken their toll. The faded yellow plastering is flaking off the facade, windows are broken, a fuse box dangles off a wall and wild animals such as martens have left trails of excrement on the dusty floors.

The forbidden city got its name during Soviet times because German locals were rarely allowed in. Today, it’s mostly off-limits for the public, though tours can be booked with Borchert’s group.

Some of the vacated rooms inside the three-story officers’ complex recall the glory years of Soviet power in East Germany.

One pale mural aggrandizes

communism, showing a powerful hydroelectric power station and muscular workers on tractors. Outside the main building entrance gate, there’s still an oversized statue of the Russian communist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin.

Some 20,000 visitors come to Wuensdorf every year to check out the town’s military history.

Aside from the forbidden city, the area also still has traces of the Nazis’ Third Reich reign — including an elaborate and secretive system of bunkers.

The fake country houses,

known as Maybach I and Maybach II, were built by the Nazis out of concrete.

They were supposed to disguise underground bunkers that housed the military and army high commands where much

of the planning of WWII was developed.

Most of the Maybach complex was destroyed after the end of the war by the Soviets, but the huge underground bunker known as Zeppelin, which served as a communication hub, is still accessible.

It’s also home to several above-ground air-raid bunkers known as Spitzbunker, which were rarely used but were a draw to the area for military buffs.

“This was already secretive during the Nazi times,” said Sylvia Rademacher, another tour guide, referring to the Zeppelin bunker.

“People who lived here, of course, knew that it was somehow related to the military, but they didn’t know the details.”

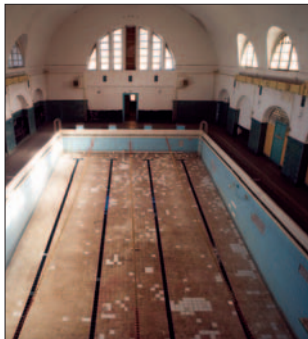
“Under Russian times, this was just as secretive or, one could say, extraterritorial — the German territory ended at the walls,” she said, adding that the Soviets used the bunker for communication purposes during the Cold War.

Reflecting on what Wuensdorf’s military history means to her personally, Rademacher paused, looking at the destroyed Maybach bunkers, and said, “For me, it’s a memorial, a warning that one has to teach young people that all of this shall not happen again.”



Photos by Markus Schreiber

A wall relief shows Vladimir Lenin, right, inside the abandoned “Haus der Offiziere,” the headquarters for the Soviets’ military high command in former East Germany in the Wuensdorf neighborhood of Zossen, some 25 miles south of Berlin.



Above: The doors stand open in a corridor of the abandoned complex, which included a swimming pool, shown at left, a theater, a museum and shopping facilities.



RAFAEL KOMINIS/AP

A monument of Lenin stands in front of the abandoned “Haus der Offiziere.”



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police searching for woman in mace attacks

NY NEW YORK — Police are looking for a woman who went on a rampage at two Manhattan subway stations, spraying people with a substance suspected to be mace.

The woman first targeted a station in Harlem at 125th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue on Friday around noon. One man was hit in his eye at close range.

Authorities said she then left the station and sprayed four more people on the street. Minutes later, a woman was sprayed in the station at West 96th Street and Broadway.

Police responded but were unable to catch up with the attacker.

Crazy ants push fire ants out of sugar cane

LA NEW ORLEANS — Tawny crazy ants are pushing fire ants out of some Louisiana sugar cane fields — one of the few places people are happy to see fire ants. Entomologists worry that the new invaders could hurt the crop.

Fire ants chomp away at one of the crop's worst pests — a moth larva called the sugar cane borer. LSU AgCenter entomologist Blake Wilson said they do that without hurting the plant.

Wilson said tawny crazy ants eat those larvae but are also known to protect aphids and other small, sucking insects that damage crops.

He's planning studies to look at the crazy ants' effectiveness at keeping down sugar cane borer infestations and to look at their interactions with other insects.

Intruder breaks in and cooks tortillas

AZ PHOENIX — Authorities said a man is accused of breaking into a Phoenix apartment and helping himself to tortillas and soup.

Court documents show Jerry Christopher Drane, 31, was arrested March 1 on suspicion of criminal trespassing.

According to charging documents, a female occupant smelled something burning. She found Drane in the kitchen cooking tortillas on a stove burner.

She yelled for her roommate and both women demanded Drane leave. They told police Drane then went onto the balcony and began eating a can of soup.

Police: Bank robber wore graduation gown

ND FARGO — Fargo police are investigating a bank robbery by a man who was wearing a graduation robe.

Police said the male suspect walked into Alerus Financial about 8 a.m. Friday and produced a note that said "give me money or I'll shoot."

Authorities said the man did not show a weapon. He was wearing a maroon or red graduation gown and fled on foot with an undetermined amount of cash.

KGO reported police were combing the neighborhood, parking lots and trash bins.

THE CENSUS

50

The number of years it took for a man to receive a telegram that congratulated him on graduating from the University of Michigan. Robert Fink, now a professor at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., received a Western Union telegram this year congratulating him on his college graduation in 1969. The telegram had been sitting in the back of an old file cabinet now owned by digital marketing agency ICON Interactive when it was discovered and delivered to him.



JOSHUA MORRISON, THE (MOUNT VERNON, OHIO) NEWS/AP

A moving tale

Amish men lift a barn on the farm of Joseph Hochstetler in northern Knox County, Ohio, early Saturday. The men carried the barn more than 150 feet, turned it 90 degrees and set it down at its new location. The entire process took just five minutes.

Secretariat sculpture nears the finish line

OK NORMAN — A sculpture of renowned racehorse Secretariat is entering the final stretch of completion in 25 years.

Secretariat won the Belmont Stakes by 31 lengths in 1973, setting the record time, and became the first Triple Crown champion in 25 years.

There are five known Secretariat sculptures, but wildlife sculptor Joeceyn Russell's piece will be the largest. Russell told The Oklahoman that the sculpture stands about 11 feet "hoof to helmet."

Police seize 'Catnip Cocktail' during raid

NJ FAIRFIELD — Police raided a health and nutrition store and seized 61 bottles of "Catnip Cocktail," a cat sedative linked to bizarre behavior.

Authorities arrested the store manager of a Nutrition Zone in Fairfield on Thursday. John Siri-

co, of Tafton, Pa., is charged with multiple drug offenses and one weapons charge.

Fairfield Police Chief Anthony Manna said officers found one man dancing and yelling near the store in July 2018 and later stopped a man driving erratically on Route 46. Officers recovered bottles of Catnip Cocktail in both instances.

The drug is not linked to the catnip plant. Police said it is similar to the euphoric drug GHB when metabolized by humans.

Man pulls record perch from reservoir ice

NV ELKO — An ice fisherman tied a 32-year-old record for the largest yellow perch caught in the state.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife said John Shorter III, of Sparks, landed the 13.5-inch perch weighing 24 ounces Feb. 16 at Elko County's Wildhorse Reservoir, 25 miles south of the Idaho line.

He tied the record Warren Goodale set in 1987.

Man admits stealing cash, cards from mail

NY ROCHESTER — The last of three New York men accused of stealing cash and gift cards from the mail has admitted his guilt.

Federal prosecutors said Cordell James, 28, of Rochester pleaded guilty to conspiracy Friday and faces up to five years in prison.

Authorities said James was employed by a U.S. Postal Service contractor at the Greater Rochester International Airport in 2018 when he and two other men conspired to steal from the mail for their personal use.

Deputy dragged by car following plow dispute

SD BLACK HAWK — Authorities said a Meade County deputy was dragged by a vehicle after he tried to intervene in a dispute between the vehicle's driver and the driver of a snowplow.

Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin told KNBN-TV that Dep-

uty Branden Torres responded to a call in Black Hawk that a man in a car was blocking the plow because the plow was making drifts in his driveway.

Merwin said the deputy was gathering information when the vehicle drove off with Torres holding onto it. He was taken to a hospital for evaluation and released.

The 24-year-old driver was taken to the Meade County Jail.

Fig tree in brick plaza in Los Angeles falls

CA LOS ANGELES — A fig tree that for 144 years shaded the brick plaza where Los Angeles was founded has fallen.

The Los Angeles Times reported one of four Moreton Bay fig trees circling El Pueblo de Los Angeles toppled this month during a Chinese lantern festival.

The trees were planted in 1875 by a city councilman, around the time Ficus trees were brought from Australia to Southern California to provide shade and ornamentation.

From wire reports

FACES



TNS

True believer

Morgan Freeman has deep faith in 'The Story of God'

BY RICK BENTLEY
Tribune News Service

The first and second seasons of the National Geographic Channel series "The Story of God with Morgan Freeman" looked at religious and philosophical questions that have been a part of the human experience since the first belief of a higher force at work. It examined questions like "Who is God?" and "Why does evil exist?"

The third season, which began March 5, continues to ponder life's big questions, such as sin and the part rituals play in the relationship to God. Host Morgan Freeman travels the globe to offer looks at what is referred to as the crown of thorns that was placed on the head of Jesus and to watch a woman channel the spirits of multiple gods to offer advice.

Executive producer Lori McCreary sees the series as a reflection of conversations

'When it comes to a person's religious beliefs, this is existence itself. I respect that and accept that.'

Morgan Freeman
actor

held around the world, particularly the curiosity of the afterlife.

"There is a passion that we have that is part of the human experience to understand. If there wasn't an ability to say that God gets us in the end, we would definitely want something to be there," McCreary says. "Seeing how all of these different religions answer that, they are really answering that passionate cry inside themselves."

"They are asking 'Are we really just alone?'" Because he sits with the subjects, Freeman has seen the passion regarding the big questions in the faces of people who practice a variety of religions. This season, Freeman meets with a priest who performs exorcisms, a Buddhist lama who leads a Tibetan ritual called the puja and a Hmong healer. No matter the religion, Freeman treats each with a deep respect.

"When it comes to a person's religious beliefs, this is existence itself. I respect that and accept that," Freeman says. "I don't judge because nobody is wrong. That one word covers it all: faith."

"I've literally been around the world talking to an enormous number of different peoples with different faiths. And the one lesson that I come away from that with is that whatever I believe, I believe. Whatever you believe, I cannot say you're wrong in it. You cannot say I'm wrong in my belief. My belief is my belief. Your belief is your belief. We're all entitled to it and we're all correct."

How well the series and Freeman have handled the examinations has helped "The Story of God" grow. McCreary noticed it was easier this season to dig a little deeper because Season 1 was such a mystery. The pro-

duction company was telling everyone they wanted to examine how much we have in common as people who believe in something outside of ourselves.

Not everyone grasped the concept the first year.

"In Season 1, we got thrown out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, because there are different factions — there's Armenians, there's Greeks, there's Franciscans, Syrians, and each of the others a different bit of the church," says executive producer James Younger. "And so if you're standing in the wrong place for too long and you've overstayed your welcome, and the other groups will start making noise throwing keys, rings, calphurns."

With two seasons of material to support their approach, it was easier to convince people to give the cast and crew access.

It has helped to have Freeman as the host. Because of his work in the films "Bruce Almighty" and "Evan Almighty," some associated the Mississippi's deep voice with divine conversations. Beyond that, the Oscar winner (for "Million Dollar Baby") is known around the globe for such films as "Glory," "Unforgiven," "Se7en" and "Driving Miss Daisy."

The series has been able to offer answers to big questions, but there's one question that makes Freeman ponder more than others. In regards to Voltaire's statement that "if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," Freeman pauses and with a puzzled look rhetorically asks the question a different way.

"Do you know why there is a God? Why God is here? Why there is such an answer? It's a guarantee. You don't have to worry about it," Freeman says. "That's it in a nutshell," Freeman says.

'Simpsons' producers pull iconic Michael Jackson episode

Associated Press

The producers of "The Simpsons" are removing a classic episode that featured the voice of Michael Jackson after HBO aired a documentary in which two men claim they were sexually abused by the singer when they were younger.

"It feels like the only choice to make," executive producer James L. Brooks told The Wall Street Journal on March 7. Fellow executive producers Matt Groening and Al Jean are "of one mind on this," Brooks said.

The action follows HBO's broadcast of the documentary "Leaving Neverland."

Jackson's family has denounced the program, saying it's full of falsehoods. His estate is suing HBO.

In the 1991 "Stark Raving Dad" episode, Jackson voiced a character who claims to be Jackson and who meets Homer Simpson in a mental institution. The singer is listed in credits as John Jay Smith.

The episode will be removed from

streaming services and future DVD sets.

Also, organizers say an online petition calling for the end of the Las Vegas Cirque du Soleil show "Michael Jackson: One" had gotten several thousand signatures by March 8. Cirque du Soleil representatives declined comment.

Actor drops 'Carlton Dance' suit against video game maker

"The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" star Alfonso Ribeiro has dropped a lawsuit against the makers of the video game "Fortnite" over its use of the "Carlton" dance he did on the show.

Ribeiro's lawyers filed documents March 7 in federal court in Los Angeles saying he's voluntarily dismissing the suit against North Carolina-based Epic Games.

No reason was given, and Ribeiro's lawyer did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

The actor, now the host of "America's Funniest Home Videos" on ABC, had al-

ready dropped a similar suit against Take-Two Interactive, makers of the video game NBA2K16.

The suits received a serious blow last month when federal officials denied Ribeiro a copyright of the "Carlton."

Ribeiro's nerdy, arm-swinging dance, usually to Tom Jones' "It's Not Unusual," was popularized through his character, Carlton Banks, on the 1990s sitcom.

Other news

■ A man recently jailed for breaking into Taylor Swift's New York City townhouse was arrested early March 7 after, police said, he did it again. Roger Alvarado, 23, of Homestead, Fla., climbed a ladder and smashed a glass door to get inside the pop star's pad around 2:30 a.m., police said. No one was home, according to police, who did not provide information on how he was caught. Alvarado, on probation after getting out of jail Feb. 5, faces stalking and burglary charges.

■ Whoopi Goldberg said she nearly died of pneumonia. Appearing on ABC's 8 in a video that aired on ABC's "The View," Goldberg told the audience she had pneumonia in both lungs. Goldberg, 63, thanked the audience for their good wishes and says she can't wait to return to "The View." Goldberg has been absent from the talk show, which she co-hosts, since Feb. 6. She did not say when she'll be back.

■ Carole Bayer Sager will receive the Johnny Mercer Award by the Songwriters Hall of Fame in June. The Oscar- and Grammy-winner, who was inducted into the Songwriters Hall in 1987, will earn the organization's highest honor on June 13 at its 50th induction ceremony in New York City. Bayer Sager, 71, has written more than 400 songs, including the Oscar-winning "Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)" from "Arthur." Michael Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Ray Charles and Bette Midler have all recorded songs written by Bayer Sager.

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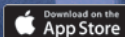
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OPINION

Nukes raise stakes of India-Pakistan conflict

By JAMES STAVRIDS

Bloomberg Opinion

While India and Pakistan seem to have stopped bombing one another, the causes behind the cross-border tensions aren't going away anytime soon. The two nations are nuclear-armed, have large conventional armed forces, have had four serious wars since they became independent in 1947 and have enormous cultural and religious antipathy. This is a prescription for a disaster, and yet the confrontation is flying below the international radar — well below North Korea, Brexit, China-U.S. trade confrontations, Iran and even the “yellow vests” of France. A full-blown war in the valleys and mountains of Kashmir is a very real possibility.

When I was supreme allied commander of NATO, the most important mission of the alliance was dealing with terrorism in Afghanistan. To help, our Pakistani partners continued to support many of the radical elements of the Taliban. They were afraid of creeping Indian influence, and much preferred a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan to a more Western-leaning and independent Afghan government. I dealt often with General Ashfaq Kayani, the top chain-smoker and chief of staff of the Pakistani army (arguably a more powerful position than the prime minister). He frequently came to NATO's political headquarters in Brussels to brief the combined military leadership of the alliance on the key threat Pakistan faced several years ago — internal terrorism. Yet always hovering over our conversations was the Pakistani military's deepest concern: India.

The most recent crisis was set off in mid-February when a Pakistani terrorist group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, detonated a suicide bomb in Indian-controlled Kashmir, killing 40 Indian paramilitary soldiers. It was the deadliest attack on security forces

since that insurgency began in earnest decades ago. While the Pakistani government denied involvement in the bombing, India believes it was aware of the incident, and therefore responded with significant airstrikes into Pakistan. Two Indian fighter jets were shot down and a pilot captured. There was an unmistakable echo of the 1947 and 1965 Kashmir conflicts, in which tens of thousands of people died.

The extremely fragile cease-fire in place for two decades is fraying. Partly that is the result of politics in India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, elected on a Hindu nationalist agenda, is up for re-election in April and May. After the Indian bombing of Pakistani territory, a popular hashtag in India became #Indiastrikesback. This is rare behavior, given that Indian armed forces have not otherwise crossed the so-called Line of Control between the nations since 1971. Former Indian Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramanian, now a professor at Tufts University, told me, “At the strategic level, we have signed a de facto heightened resolve on the part of the Modi government to change the response matrix in the aftermath of a confirmed jihadi attack from safe havens in Pakistan.”

Most worrisome, of course, are the significant nuclear arsenals of the combatants. Each has roughly 150 missiles, although only India has a submarine-based ballistic missile capability and thus a true nuclear triad (land, air and sea). Pakistan is developing sea-launched cruise missiles to counter that Indian threat. India has adopted a “no first use” doctrine, although Pakistan may have smaller conventional forces and thus the potential for a more ambiguous doctrine — has not made an equivalent pledge. Paradoxically, that both sides want to avoid a nuclear conflict has probably prevented an escalation on the conventional side during recent crises.

In past conflicts, the U.S. has played a mediating role. But today Pakistan is more

inclined to work with China. India has strong relations with both the U.S. and Russia, but is unlikely to turn to either, so as not to appear beholden to any peer “great state.” That tracks with the tendency of the Trump administration to let nations work things out themselves. Other than national security adviser John Bolton's sensible comment that the U.S. supports India's right to self-defense, there has been little saying on the sidelines. Complicating the picture is that Washington is trying to enlist Pakistani aid in ending the long war in Afghanistan by reining in the Taliban.

What the U.S. can do most effectively is to quietly encourage both sides to step back from escalation — which Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan did by releasing the Indian jet pilot unharmed. We should also offer our intelligence capabilities to both India and Pakistan as each of them deal with the disruptive terrorist groups operating from Pakistani soil — Jaish-e-Mohammed and the even more deadly Lashkar-e-Taiba. The U.S. could also encourage other mediation by allies and international organizations, in particular Saudi Arabia, which reportedly was influential in the release of the Indian pilot.

As Hussein Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., recently pointed out, Pakistan is in a situation of an economic crisis. While the Khan government has tried to defuse the situation, in part by appealing to the International Monetary Fund, internal pressures are building. Make no mistake: With Pakistan's economic plight and the upcoming elections in May, there is a real possibility of a coup or a military miscalculation, perhaps even a nuclear one, a real possibility.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist James Stavridis is a retired U.S. Navy admiral and former supreme allied commander of NATO. He is dean emeritus of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, an adjunct professor at the Center for the Carlyle Group and also chairs the board of counselors at McLarty Associates.

Authoritarians' corruption a weapon and a weakness

By DAVID PETRAEUS
AND SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
Special to The Washington Post

Thirty years after the end of the Cold War, the world is once again polarized between two competing visions for how to organize society. On one side are countries such as the United States, which are founded on respect for the inalienable rights of the individual and governed by rule of law. On the other side are countries where state power is concentrated in the hands of a single person, clique, accountable only to itself and only by corruption.

Alarmingly, while Washington has grown ambivalent in recent years about the extent to which America should encourage the spread of democracy and human rights abroad, authoritarian regimes have become increasingly aggressive and creative in devising ways to exploit their own values against the United States and its allies. Russian President Vladimir Putin and other authoritarian rulers have worked assiduously to weaponize corruption as an instrument of foreign policy, using money in opaque and illicit ways to gain influence over other countries, subvert the rule of law and otherwise remake foreign governments in their own kleptocratic image.

In that respect, the fight against corruption is more than a legal and moral issue; it has become a strategic one — and a battlefield in a great power competition.

Yet corruption is not only one of the most potent weapons wielded by America's authoritarian rivals, it is also, in many cases, what sustains these regimes in power and

is their Achilles' heel.

For figures such as Putin, the existence of America's rule-of-law world is intrinsically threatening. Having enriched themselves on a staggering scale — exploiting positions of public trust for personal gain — they live in fear that the full extent of their corrupt behavior has been publicly exposed, and that the U.S. example might inspire their people to demand better.

Corrupt regimes also know that, even as they strive to undermine the rule of law around the world, they are dependent on it to a remarkable degree. In contrast to the Cold War, when the Soviet bloc was sealed off from the global economy and sustained by its faith in communist ideology, today's autocrats and their cronies cynically seek to spend and shelter their spoils in democratic nations, where they want to shop, buy real estate, get health care and send their children to school.

Ironically, one of the reasons 21st-century tyrants are so fixated on transferring their wealth to the United States and similar countries is because of the protections afforded by the rule of law. Having accumulated their fortunes illegally, they are cognizant that someone more connected to power could come along and rob them too, as law and order is less sure at home.

Fortunately, the United States has begun to take steps to harden its rule-of-law defenses and push back against foreign adversaries. The passage of the Global Magnitsky Act in 2016, for instance, provided a powerful new tool for targeting corruption worldwide that is being increasingly utilized. But there is more to do.

In particular, the United States should

make it more difficult for kleptocrats, and their agents, to secretly move money through the rule-of-law world, whether by opening bank accounts, transferring funds or hiding assets behind shell corporations. Failure to close loopholes is an invitation to foreign interference in America's democracy.

Congress should tighten campaign finance laws to improve transparency given that U.S. elections are clearly being targeted for manipulation by great-power competitors. At the same time, the United States must become more aggressive and forthcoming in identifying and rooting out corruption overseas. Just as the Treasury Department has developed sophisticated financial-intelligence capabilities in response to the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, it is time to expand this effort to track, disrupt and expose the corrupt activities of authoritarian competitors and those aligned with them.

Hardening the nation's rule-of-law defenses is not, of course, a substitute for traditional forms of U.S. power, including military strength and economic dynamism. But it can provide an additional set of tools to bolster national security.

In the intensifying worldwide struggle between the rule of law and corruption, the United States cannot afford neutrality. Complacency about graft and kleptocracy beyond U.S. borders risks complicity in it — with grave consequences both for the nation's reputation abroad and Americans' well-being at home.

David Petraeus is a retired U.S. Army general and former director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Democrat, is a U.S. senator from Rhode Island.

OPINION

Sen. Paul is wrong: Vaccines are no threat to liberty

By SAAD B. OMER

Special to The Washington Post

Vaccines are one of the most important advances in public health of the last two centuries. Immunization saves millions of lives every year, and horrific illnesses that were simply unpreventable not long ago have been eliminated.

So why does Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., see them as a threat to liberty?

I testified Tuesday before a Senate committee hearing on recent outbreaks of measles and other diseases that immunization has mostly wiped out. While most lawmakers on the panel agreed on the importance of vaccination, Paul raised significant doubts. A physician, Paul said he and his children are vaccinated and that he believes the benefits of vaccines greatly outweigh the risks.

But he also registered his opposition to mandatory vaccination, making factually dubious claims in the process. Paul declared that the government never mandated the smallpox vaccine — conveniently ignoring, among other things, Jacobson v. Massachusetts, the 1905 case in which a man unsuccessfully challenged a vaccine mandate. Jacobson is often considered a seminal decision in public health case law.

Paul said “persuasion” would be a better way to ensure vaccination than would mandates. And he paraphrased Ben Franklin: “I still don’t favor giving up on liberty for a false sense of security” — as if protection afforded by vaccines is merely a matter of perception. He didn’t ask any questions and yielded his time after his statement. Maybe the senator’s only goal was the flood of newspaper headlines received.

My perspective on Paul’s comments is shaped both by my research into public health, epidemiology and immunization, and by my experience as a naturalized U.S. citizen who immigrated here after spending most of my childhood living under a dictatorship. I don’t take questions of personal liberty lightly. But Paul is wrong.

Overall, U.S. vaccine mandates strike the right balance between personal freedom and public protection. These mandates work by changing the “balance of convenience” in favor of vaccination by putting some bureaucratic hurdles in the way of refusing the shots.

There is substantial state-by-state variability in mandates. All states allow exemptions from mandates for medical reasons, and all but three allow exemptions for “personal belief” or religious reasons. Starting in 2006, I and others have shown that making it more difficult to get an ex-

emption is not only associated with lower vaccine refusal rates but also with lower vaccine-preventable disease rates.

But what does “difficult” mean in the context of vaccine exemptions? Essentially, it means requiring administrative steps to get exemptions. For example, some states make parents provide a letter stating why vaccination is against their personal or religious beliefs. In other states, parents seeking nonmedical exemptions are required to go through physician counseling. Another option is requiring parents to watch an online educational video.

All of this is good public policy because vaccine-compliant parents not only protect their own children, but they also contribute to the protection of other children — including children of vaccine refusers.

Vaccine-accepting parents spend considerable effort to keep their children up-to-date on vaccines. In their children’s first five years, parents have to take kids for about seven vaccination visits. Since forcing parents to be more proactive, a proportion of these vaccinated children remain unprotected. That would be OK if everyone else was vaccinated, as well. But refusing parents, in the name of their own freedom, put not only their own children but other children at risk — undermining the compliant parents’ own freedom to

choose to protect their children.

So is it really an unreasonable infringement on liberty to expect those who end up increasing everyone’s disease risk to make at least a fraction of the effort that vaccine-compliant parents make? Some requirements, such as physician counseling, have the added benefit of making vaccine decisions truly informed. Even in the three states that do not allow tax or nonmedical exemptions, the maximum penalty is not allowing unvaccinated children to attend school, often during outbreaks.

I believe Paul when he says he supports vaccination, but I suggest he reconsider his position on mandates. The Franklin quote he nodded to on Tuesday, ironically, means the opposite of what Paul was arguing. When Franklin said, “Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety,” he was opposing the Penn family’s attempt to carve out an exception for themselves from the Pennsylvania General Assembly’s law that required vaccination for the collective good of frontier defense. The liberty Franklin was defending was the liberty the rest of us deserve now, too — liberty to choose to protect ourselves.

Saad B. Omer is the William H. Foege chair in global health and a professor of global health, epidemiology and pediatrics at Emory University.

Senators caution VA on expansion of caregiver benefits

By TOM PHILPOTT

Special to Stars and Stripes

MILITARY UPDATE

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., says she is grateful to Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie on behalf of thousands of caregivers of veterans who suffered severe physical or mental injuries while in service since the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

At Murray’s request, Wilkie last December ordered suspension of further downgrades or stoppage of caregiver benefits to current recipients until the VA can attest that its health care facilities nationwide are running and resourcing the caregiver program consistently and as Congress intended.

On the other hand, Murray says, she and Democratic colleagues in the Senate are alarmed by other VA actions related to expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to older generations of severely injured veterans as Congress directed under last year’s VA Mission Act.

“VA continues to miss deadlines and not get it right,” Murray said in a phone interview Wednesday. “And we have got to make them step up to the plate and make this work.”

In a Feb. 28 letter to Wilkie, Murray and nine other Senate Democrats, including ranking members on the Veterans’ Affairs and Armed Services committees, contend the VA already is months behind in needed upgrades to information technology to begin to extend caregiver benefits to qualified veterans of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars by Oct. 1, as Congress directed.

The letter also charges VA officials with a lack of transparency as they draft regulations to implement caregiver expansion, and criticizes some steps the VA has said it wants to take to hold down future program costs. For example, by allowing access to caregiver benefits and changing methods for calculating caregiver stipends. The letter warns Wilkie that the VA lacks authority to make some of the changes even without getting Congress to make changes in law.

A VA handout says more than 38,000 caregivers have been enrolled in the program since it was established in 2011. The

annual cost exceeds \$900 million and will rise sharply as the program expands to benefit family caregivers of surviving veterans who received severe line-of-duty injuries since World War II.

The VA says it wants to make eligibility determinations more transparent and consistent. As the Mission Act requires, eligibility will be based on a veteran requiring assistance with at least one activity of daily living, or needing supervision or protection to remain in their community. But to ensure consistency, the VA has signaled it will require a more rigid definition of serious injury and an explicit need for daily assistance with more monitoring visits and an annual reassessment.

Murray and colleagues want more details on what she planned.

“At this point they have not responded to any of our inquiries,” said Murray in an interview. “They are not answering our questions. They are not telling us what they have in mind. So, we are doing everything we can to make this visible so they, if we have to, are forced to fix it.”

Murray was the leading advocate in Congress for establishing and expanding family caregiver benefits to severely injured veterans since Congress first approved a comprehensive caregiver benefit package in 2010, initially only for veterans severely injured during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

In 2011, as then-new chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, Murray lambasted the Obama administration over its draft rules to implement that benefit, criticizing missed deadlines and restrictive language that limit access.

As caregiver and severely injured veterans of past wars ease criticized the inequity of extending benefits only to the post-9/11 generation, Murray led a bipartisan fight to expand eligibility. With help of colleagues, she finally got it done under a phased schedule as part of the 2018 VA Mission Act.

Caregiver benefits include a caregiver stipend, access to health care insurance,

training and stress counseling and a period of paid respite away from caregiver responsibilities. Eligibility is to be phased in for people caring for veterans catastrophically injured in past conflicts back to World War I. Expansion of benefits to veterans who received severe line-of-duty injuries after May 7, 1975, and before 9/11 would begin two years after earlier generations become eligible.

While expansion is expected to add hundreds of millions of dollars to VA budgets, Murray and other advocates contend the program also saves federal dollars because families avoid having to institutionalize veterans to get proper care.

VA officials have contended they can’t expand caregiver benefits without a significant upgrade in information technology. Congress funded that effort but the VA missed an Oct. 1 deadline last year to declare the new IT system operational.

“We told them, ‘Get it done,’” said Murray. “Behind their walls I don’t know what they’re doing to get it done. It’s not done yet. And it needs to be fixed.”

For the past two years, Murray and staff contend, the VA aggressively downgraded caregiver benefits or discharged veterans from the program. It was deemed a particular problem for veterans severely disabled from post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury as VA health care providers judged them capable of performing activities of daily living without aid of a caregiver.

To a rising clamor from families and from Murray, Wilkie agreed to impose a soft VA moratorium on discharging severely disabled veterans with PTSD. Murray said she is worried they can begin again whenever Wilkie declares past inconsistencies in management and oversight to have been found and fixed.

She wants the VA to explain to Congress why so many families felt the program had been unevenly operated and under resourced. That’s especially important with expansion planned for older generations of severely injured vets, Murray said.

“Before restarting appropriate discharges and downgrades,” senators told Wilkie in their recent letter, “we ask that you require training, leadership, and oversight improve-

ments, and that you request an independent evaluation of the efficacy of those steps by the Office of Inspector General.”

In the Mission Act, they added, “we structured a responsible, phased approach to the expansion to allow VA to strengthen the program. VA cannot continue to squander the time and the program must be able to meet the statutory deadlines, because veterans are urgently in need of this support.”

The senators noted that expansion to severely injured veterans of Vietnam and earlier wars can’t begin until the VA has a new IT system operating. The Oct. 1, 2018, deadline for that “has come and gone, and it is not clear if or how VA will ensure the certification deadline of the system, October 1, 2019, is met.”

The letter reminds Wilkie that government auditors first recommended the VA fix its caregiver IT system in September 2014, and the VA “has repeatedly assured us it is working on this issue. We urge you to immediately expedite these efforts, including by examining whether commercial-off-the-shelf solutions can rapidly and effectively meet the Department’s needs.”

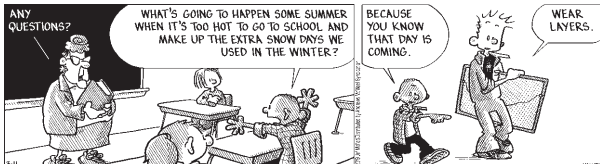
The letter further notes that for the past two years the Trump administration, in its VA budget requests has shorted the caregiver program by several hundred million dollars, forcing Congress to add funds so all eligible post-9/11 caregivers continue to get promised benefits. It urges Wilkie not to short the program again.

“The Department must also ensure sufficient staff are in place to handle the high workload and to prepare for the program’s expansion,” the letter continues. “Caregiver Support Coordinators are already overwhelmed as are the administrative staff essential to running the program.”

The VA had no immediate reaction to charges made in the letter, which also demanded that the department provide Congress with the most recent data and statistics available to give a fuller picture of how the caregiver program operates.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, Va. 20120; email mupdate@aol.com; or Twitter: @Military_Update.

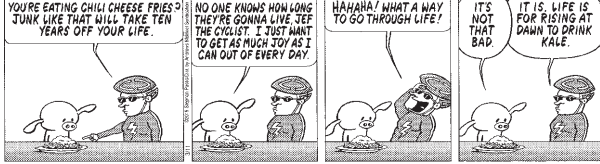
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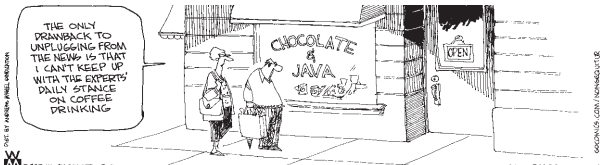
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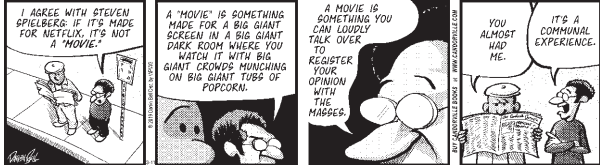
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15				16						17		
				18				19		20		
21	22	23						24				
25				26		27		28			29	30
31				32		33		34		35		
36				37		38		39		40		
				41		42		43		44		
45	46							47				
48				49		50				51	52	53
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

ACROSS

- Atlas page
- Ivy League University
- Science room
- GPS suggestion
- Haunting
- Docs' org.
- 19589 AI
- Pacino film
- Decks in the ring
- Small battery
- Yard tools
- "Understood"
- Membership
- Tolkien beast
- Civil War soldier
- Pulitzer category
- Abound
- Narc's org.
- Dr. McGraw
- Anticipate
- Chips go-with
- Sugar suffix
- Mark Harmon
- TV series
- School break
- Shun
- Owned
- Sashimi fish
- New York

DOWN

- "Miniver"
- Packed away
- Shell-game item
- "No cheating!"
- Akin
- Acapulco gold
- "The First — Club"
- Required
- Sierra Nevada resort
- Cupid's specialty
- Low range
- Granola grain
- John Irving hero
- Teeny bit
- Got bigger
- Maryland beach town
- Nap site
- Avoid
- Pub orders
- Lansing's st.
- Dunce
- Steering system part
- Gems from oysters
- Pigs
- 44LPs' successors
- Jug handles
- "Scram!"
- Churchill gesture
- Conditions
- Pair
- Conclusion

Answer to Previous Puzzle

AOK	CAAN	SCOW
SLO	AGRA	TIDE
TAN	PALP	ENID
IFALL	TOPI	ECES
	EEE	IMP
ECLAT	MNO	FUN
ASIF	BIG	DINO
RID	POX	PAGED
	MAD	GEM
IFEEL	YOUR	PAIN
SAWN	FRAN	TBA
IVES	AERO	MER
SERA	TODD	STY

3-11

CRYPTOQUIP

BJQT HJQ HJDQE BFTHQG
 YMNQ YNFOO UJMUMOFHQY,
 GM LMA HJDT C JQ BFY
 IAD OHL ME YHQFO DTI
 CDYYQY?

Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF SOMEBODY FAILS TO PROPERLY CARE FOR SOMETHING, THERE MIGHT BE UNTENDED CONSEQUENCES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals T


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Automotive 140**SELLER BEWARE**

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SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

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Auto racing

iR5 Service Dog 200

- NASCAR Xfinity Series**
Saturday
At ISM Raceway
Avondale, Ariz.
Lead length: 1.00 miles
(Start position in parentheses)
- (1) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 200 laps, 0 rating, 3 points.
 - (2) Ryan Truex, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 40.
 - (3) Tyler Reddick, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 48.
 - (4) Cole Custer, Ford, 200, 0, 37.
 - (5) Austin Cindric, Ford, 200, 0, 47.
 - (6) Chase Briscoe, Ford, 200, 0, 31.
 - (7) Brandon Jones, Toyota, 200, 0, 30.
 - (8) Michael Annett, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 36.
 - (9) John H. Nemechek, Chevrolet, 197, 0, 27.
 - (10) Ryan Sieg, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 30.
 - (11) Noah Gragson, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 36.
 - (12) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 27.
 - (13) Jeremy Clements, Chevrolet, 200, 0, 24.
 - (14) Justin Algaier, Chevrolet, 199, 0, 32.
 - (15) Brandon Brown, Chevrolet, 199, 0, 22.
 - (16) Gray Gaulding, Chevrolet, 199, 0, 21.
 - (17) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 199, 0, 20.
 - (18) Ray Black Jr, Chevrolet, 199, 0, 19.
 - (19) Chad Finchum, Toyota, 197, 0, 0.
 - (20) Tyler Hill, Toyota, 197, 0, 0.
 - (21) (25) BJ McLeod, Chevrolet, 196, 0, 16.
 - (22) Garrett Smithley, Chevrolet, 199, 0, 15.
 - (23) Vinnie Miller, Chevrolet, 196, 0, 14.
 - (24) (21) Joey Gase, Toyota, 195, 0, 13.
 - (25) Mike Harmon, Chevrolet, 192, 0, 0.
 - (26) (22) Josh Billicki, Chevrolet, 189, 0, 11.
 - (27) (30) David Starr, Chevrolet, 188, 0, 10.
 - (28) (31) Matt Mills, Toyota, 182, 0, 9.
 - (29) (32) Josh Williams, Chevrolet, 191, 0, 17.
 - (30) Christopher Bell, Toyota, accident, 129, 0, 6.
 - (31) (30) Ronnie Basset Jr, Chevrolet, brakes, 61, 0, 5.
 - (32) (32) Jeff Green, Chevrolet, vibrations, 59, 0, 4.
 - (33) (33) Morgan Shepherd, Chevrolet, fuelpump, 56, 0, 3.
 - (34) (34) Tommy Joe Martins, Chevrolet, buckles, 49, 0, 2.
 - (35) (35) Stan Mullis, Toyota, garage, 35, 0, 1.
 - (36) (36) Bayley Curry, Chevrolet, accident, 30, 0, 0.

Race Statistics
Average Speed of Race Winner: 100.2 mph.
Time of Race: 1 hour, 59 minutes, 30 seconds.
Margin of Victory: 3.025 seconds.
Caution Flags: 4 for 35 laps.
Lead Changes: 12 among 15 drivers.
Top Formula: C-Bell 0-3; C-Custer 35; A-Cindric 36-48; C-Bell 49-62; K-Busch 53; C-Bell 56; K-Busch 59-69; K-Bell 70-94; G-Gragson 95; C-Bell 96-99; K-Busch 100-132; C-Custer 133; K-Busch 134-200.
Most Laps Led: K-Busch, 4 times for 112 laps; C-Bell, 5 times for 64 laps; A-Cindric, 1 time for 6 laps; C-Custer, 2 times for 5 laps; G-Gragson, 1 time for 0 laps.
Wins: K-Busch, 2; A-Mannett, 1; C-Bell, 1.
Top 10 in Points: 1. T-Reddick, 169; 2. C-Bell, 165; 3. C-Custer, 158; 4. A-Mannett, 147; 5. Jones, 147; 6. A-Cindric, 147; 7. J-Nemechek, 140; 8. N-Gragson, 130; 9. J-Algaier, 129; 10. R-Sieg, 126.
NASCAR Driver Rating Formula:
A maximum of 150 points can be attained in a race.
The formula combines the following categories: Wins, Finishes, Top-15 Finishes, Average Running Position while on Lead Lap, Average Speed Under Lead Lap, Fastest Lap, Most Laps Led, Lead Lap Finish.

College basketball

Men's conference tournaments

America East Conference
At Higher-Seeded Schools
Seminals
Tuesday, March 12
Binghamton at Vermont
at Hartford at UMass
Championship
Saturday, March 16
Seminifinal winners
Atlantic Sun Conference
At Higher-Seeded Schools
Seminals
Thursday, March 7
Lipscomb 71, North Florida 63
Liberty 78, NJIT 59
Championship
Sunday, March 10
Liberty vs. Lipscomb
Big South Conference
First Round
Friday, March 8
Radford 63, Charleston Southern 54
Gardner-Webb 79, Campbell 74
Championship
At Higher-Seeded Teams
Collegiate Athletic Association
At North Charleston, S.C.
First Round
Saturday, March 9
James Madison 74, Towson 73
Eastern Michigan 53, Ohio 51
Quarterfinals
Monday, March 10
Hofstra vs. James Madison
William & Mary vs. Delaware
North Carolina vs. UNC Wilmington
College of Charleston vs. Drexel
Championship
At Little Caesars Arena
Seminals
Monday, March 11
Wright State vs. Miami
Oakland vs. Northern Kentucky
Championship
Tuesday, March 12
Seminifinal winners
Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference
At Albany, N.Y.
Quarterfinals
Friday, March 8
Iona 73, Saint Peter's 68
Canisius 69, Manhattan 65, OT
Marist 67, Fairfield 66
Monmouth (N.J.) 98, Quinnipiac 92
Siena 67, Rider 81
Seminals
Saturday, March 10
Iona vs. Siena
Canisius vs. Monmouth
Championship
Monday, March 11
Seminifinal winners
American Conference
First Round
Monday, March 11
Miami at Akron
Western Michigan at Central Michigan
Ohio at Northern Illinois
Ohio at Eastern Michigan
At Cleveland
Thursday, March 14
Buffalo vs. Akron-Miami winner
Kent State vs. Central Michigan-Western Michigan winner
Toledo vs. Northern Illinois-Ohio winner
Bowling Green vs. Eastern Michigan-Ball State winner
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
At Norfolk, Va.
First Round
Monday, March 11
Savannah State vs. Delaware State
Championship
Tuesday, March 12
Maryland Eastern Shore vs. S.C. State
Coppin State vs. Morgan State
Quarterfinals
Wednesday, March 13
Norfolk State vs. Maryland Eastern Shore-S.C. State winner
A&T vs. Coppin State-Morgan State winner
Thursday, March 14
N.C. Central vs. Savannah State-Delaware State winner, 6 p.m.
Howard vs. Bethune-Cookman
Missouri Valley Conference
At St. Louis
First Round
Saturday, March 9
Bradley 53, Loyola of Chicago 51
Northern Iowa 61, Drake 50
Championship
Sunday, March 10
Bradley vs. Northern Iowa
West Coast Conference
At Higher-Seeded Schools
Seminals
Saturday, March 9
Fairleigh Dickinson 66, Robert Morris 62
Saint Francis (Pa.) 72, LIU Brooklyn 64
Championship
Tuesday, March 12
Fairleigh Dickinson vs. Saint Francis (Pa.)

Lehigh 73, Army 70
Navy 60, American 56
Seminals
Sunday, March 10
Navy at Colgate, Wake Forest
Lehigh at Bucknell
Championship
Wednesday, March 13
Seminifinal winners
At Asheville, N.C.
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 9
Wofford 99, VMI 77
ETSU 68, Chattanooga 64
UNC Greensboro 77, Samford 70
Furman 85, Mercer 69
Seminals
Sunday, March 10
Wofford vs. ETSU
UNC Greensboro vs. Furman
Championship
Monday, March 11
Seminifinal winners
Summit League
At Sioux Falls, S.D.
First Round
Saturday, March 9
Western Illinois 79, South Dakota St. 76
Omaha 81, North Dakota 76
Sunday, March 10
South Dakota St. vs. Oral Roberts
Purdue Fort Wayne vs. North Dakota
Seminals
Monday, March 11
Western Illinois vs. North Dakota
St. Mary's vs. Oral Roberts
Omaha vs. Purdue Fort Wayne-South Dakota winner
Championship
Tuesday, March 12
Seminifinal winners
Horizon League
West Coast Conference
At Las Vegas
Third Round
Saturday, March 9
Pepperdine 79, San Francisco 72
San Diego 80, BYU 57
Seminals
Sunday, March 10
Gonzaga vs. Pepperdine
Saint Mary's vs. San Diego
Championship
Tuesday, March 12
Seminifinal winners

Women's conference tournaments

America East Conference
Seminals
Sunday, March 10
at Hartford at Fairfield
Championship
At Brookfield, Conn.
Friday, March 15
Seminifinal winners
American Athletic Conference
At Uncasville, Conn.
Championship
Saturday, March 9
South Florida 72, Houston 55
UCN 92, East Carolina 65
UCF 66, Tulsa 54
Cincinnati 68, Memphis 48
Seminals
Sunday, March 10
UCN vs. South Florida
Cincinnati vs. UCF
Atlantic 10 Conference
At Greensboro, N.C.
Saturday, March 9
Notre Dame 91, Syracuse 68
Louisville 78, N.C. State 68
Championship
Atlantic Sun Conference
At Higher-Seeded Schools
Seminals
Wednesday, March 13
Kennesaw State at Florida Gulf Coast
Loyola (Md.) at Bucknell
Championship
At Houston
Holy Cross at Boston University
Southern Conference
At Greenville, S.C.
Seminals
Saturday, March 9
Mississippi State 74, Missouri 56
Arkansas 65, Texas Tech 61
Championship
Sunday, March 10
Mississippi State vs. Arkansas
Southern Conference
At Asheville, N.C.
Seminals
Friday, March 8
Mercer 69, Wake Forest 51
Furman 73, Chattanooga 67
Championship
Sunday, March 10
Mercer vs. Furman
Summit League
At Sioux Falls, S.D.
First Round
Saturday, March 9
South Dakota State 86, Purdue Fort Wayne 50
South Dakota 74, North Dakota State 51
Sunday, March 10
Oral Roberts vs. Western Illinois
Denver vs. North Dakota
West Coast Conference
At Las Vegas
Third Round
Saturday, March 9
Saint Mary's 70, Loyola Marymount 38
Pepperdine 67, Pacific 64
Seminals
Monday, March 11
Gonzaga vs. Saint Mary's
BYU vs. Pepperdine
Championship
Tuesday, March 12
Seminifinal winners

Deals

Saturday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League
DETROIT TIGERS - Optioned LHP Matt Hall and RHP Sandy Baez to Toledo (IL) and RHP Franklin Perez to Lakeland (FL).
HOUSTON ASTROS - Optioned RHP Brown Abreu and C Garret Soto to minor league camp. Reassigned RHP Akeem Bostick to Fort Lauderdale (FL).
TEXAS RANGERS - Assigned RHPs Tyler Guerrieri and Michael Tonkin and LHPs Miguel Del Pozo and Brady Feigl to minor league camp.
National League
ATLANTA BRAVES - Optioned LHP Luis Guizar and RHPs Chris Evers and Patrick Weigel to Gwinnett (IL).
CHICAGO CUBS - Released RHP Rob Scott, Optioned RHPs Adonis Alzola and Jen-Ho Tseng to Iowa (PCL) and RHP Oscar De La Cruz and LHP Jesse Leones to Tennessee (SL). Assigned RHPs Craig Brackley, Carlos Ramirez, Collin Rea and Duncan Robinson; LHPs Alberto Baldonado and Eric Clark; OFs Charner Burks Jacob Hanemann and Evan Marzilli; and C Ian Rie to their minor league camp.
COLORADO ROCKIES - Optioned RHP Ryan Gonzalez to Albuquerque (PCL).
MIAMI MARLINs - Optioned OFs Magneuris Sierra and RHPs Jordan Yamamoto and Jose Rodriguez to St. Petersburg (FL). Assigned RHPs Jose Guillen to New Orleans (PCL); RHP Jorge Guzman to Jacksonville (FL); and RHP Jordan Holloway to Jupiter (FL).
NEW YORK METS - Released 3B T.J. Lincecum.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES - Optioned RHPs Ryan Anderson, RHPs Edgar and Mike Keller to Indianapolis (IL). Reassigned C Jason Blair, RHPs David Huard and Eduardo Vera and LHPs Elvis Escobar and Blake Weiman to their minor league camp.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS - Agreed to terms with RHP John Brebbia, Giovanni Gallego, LHPs Alex Meyer and Jhonny Williams on one-year contracts. Renewed the contracts of RHPs Josh Liddle and Jhonny Hicks.
NEW YORK PADRES - Optioned RHP Anderson Espinoza to Lake Elsinore (Cal.).
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS - Reassigned RHPs Carlos Navas and Kieran Lowrey to their minor league camp.
WASHINGTON NATIONALS - Optioned RHP James Blumstein and C Graudy Reed (PCL).
BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
NBA - Fined Oklahoma City Thunder F Paul George \$25,000 for public criticism of the officiating.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
MIAMI DOLPHINS - Agreed to terms with TE Dwayne Allen on a two-year contract.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
NHL - Fined Anaheim Ducks' Ritchie \$4,121.86 for check-checking.
KANSAS CITY STARS - Reassigned C Justin Dowling to a two-year, two-way contract extension.
LOS ANGELES KINGS - Recalled F Carl Grundstrom from Ontario (AHL).
NEW JERSEY DEVILS - Recalled FS Eric Tangradi and Brandon Gionard from Binghamton (AHL).
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
NEW YORK CITY FC - Signed D Abdi Mohamed and loaned him to Memphis 901 FC. Championship game on March 17.
COLLEGE
TEXAS - Fired head coach from Binghamton.

College hockey

Saturday's scores
EAST
Maine 6, Boston College 2
MIDWEST
St. Cloud St. 4, Minn.-Duluth 3
W. Michigan 6, Miami 1
North Dakota 5, Omaha 4, OT
PACIFIC
Colorado College 1, Denver 0
TOLSON
Atlantic Hockey Association
First Round
Canisius 4, Ohio 1
Army 5, Mercyhurst 1
Robert Morris 3, St. Francis Cross 2
Big Ten Conference
Minnesota 4, Michigan 1
Penn St. 6, Wisconsin 2
Notre Dame 2, Michigan State 0
ECAC
First Round
St. Lawrence 3, Dartmouth 2, OT
Union 4, Colgate 0
Brown 4, Princeton 2
Western College Hockey Association
Western College Hockey Association
Lake Superior St. 3, Bemidji State 1
Northern Michigan 3, Alaska 3
Bowling Green 6, Michigan Tech 2
Minnesota State 4, Alabama Huntsville 1

NHL

Roundup

Sharks take over Best with OT defeat of Blues

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Kevin Labanc scored at 3:21 of overtime. Timo Meier had two goals and the San Jose Sharks beat the St. Louis Blues 3-2 on Saturday to take the Western Conference lead.

Labanc scored his 12th goal off assists from Logan Couture and Tomas Hertl.

Meier extended his goals streak to four games with his 25th and 26th to help San Jose win its fourth straight and move a point ahead of the idle Calgary Flames. The Sharks are 13-3-1 in their last 17 games.

Bruins 3, Senators 2: David Krejci tipped in the go-ahead goal with 44.7 seconds left and host Boston beat Ottawa to extend its NHL-best points streak to 19 games.

Danton Heinen skated into the shot and took a wrist shot that Krejci redirected past Senators goalie Craig Anderson, giving the Bruins their sixth straight victory overall and 10th in a row at home.

Lighting 3, Red Wings 2: Nikita Kucherov scored twice while breaking host Tampa Bay's single-season record for points.

Kucherov has 33 goals and 77 assists for 110 points through 69 games. Vinny Lecavalier held the previous franchise record, finishing with 108 points with 52 goals and 56 assists in 2006-07.

Flyers 5, Islanders 2: James van Riemsdyk had a goal and an assist, helping Philadelphia win in New York.

Ryan Hartman, Sean Couture, Nolan Patrick and Travis Konecny also scored for the Flyers, and Brian Elliott made 25 saves. Scott Mayfield and Nick Leddy scored for the Islanders.

Avalanche 3, Sabres 0: Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and two assists, Philipp Grubauer stopped 18 shots for his second shutout of the season and playoff-chasing Colorado beat visiting Buffalo.

Mikko Rantanen scored on the power play and Gabriel Bourque added a full-length, empty-net goal for the Avalanche. They were missing captain Gabriel Landeskog with the All-Star forward sidelined four-to-six weeks due to an upper-body injury.

Golden Knights 6, Canucks 2: Mark Stone scored his first goal for Vegas, and the Golden Knights won at Vancouver for their sixth straight victory.

Paul Stastny, Alex Tuch, Tomas Nosek, Cody Eakin and Nate Schmidt also scored for Las Vegas. Marc-Andre Fleury had 29



Ben Marriot/AP

St. Louis Blues goalie Jake Allen makes a save against the San Jose Sharks in the Blues' 3-2 overtime win on Saturday.

saves for his 438th win, moving past Jacques Plante for eighth on the NHL's career list.

Blue Jackets 4, Penguins 1: Cam Atkinson had two goals, Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 28 shots and host Columbus broke an eight-game losing streak against Pittsburgh.

Maple Leafs 3, Oilers 2: John Tavares had a goal and two assists and Toronto won at Edmonton.

Morgan Rielly and Jake Muzzin also scored and Frederik Andersen made 33 saves to help Toronto improve to 6-1-1 in its last eight.

Coyotes 4, Kings 2: Christian Dvorak and Michael Grabner each scored two goals and Darcy Kuemper made 33 saves to win for the ninth time in 10 starts, leading host Arizona.

Blackhawks 2, Stars 1: Alex DeBrincat and David Kamrekar scored on odd-man rushes in the first period and Chicago won at Dallas.

Corey Crawford and the Blackhawks shut out the Stars for the last 53:37 in the team's second straight victory. Crawford made 26 saves in his third victory in four games since recovering from a concussion.

Hurricanes 5, Predators 3: Nino Niederreiter scored twice in the first period and Carolina won at Nashville to sweep the season series.

Rangers 4, Devils 2: Vladislav Namestnikov snapped a tie in the third period and host New York beat New Jersey to stop a six-game slide.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Tampa Bay	69	52	13	4	108	266	181
Boston	68	42	17	9	93	205	169
Toronto	68	42	21	5	89	244	193
Montreal	69	36	26	7	79	208	207
Florida	68	29	27	12	70	214	212
Buffalo	68	30	29	9	69	194	219
Detroit	68	24	34	10	58	187	233
Ottawa	69	23	40	6	52	203	258
Metropolitan Division							
Washington	68	39	21	8	85	234	211
N.Y. Islanders	68	39	22	7	85	198	188
C.A. Rangers	68	37	24	7	81	205	191
Pittsburgh	68	36	23	9	81	233	208
Columbus	68	38	27	3	79	209	207
Philadelphia	68	33	27	8	74	209	226
N.Y. Rangers	68	33	27	8	74	209	226
New Jersey	69	25	35	9	59	191	232

Metropolitan Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	68	39	26	11	234	211
N.Y. Islanders	68	39	22	7	188	168
Carolina	68	36	23	9	205	191
Pittsburgh	68	36	23	9	81	233
N.Y. Rangers	68	36	27	3	79	209
Philadelphia	68	33	27	9	85	209
N.Y. Rangers	68	28	28	12	68	196
New Jersey	69	25	35	9	59	191

Western Conference

	Central Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	67	40	23	4	84	232	199
Nashville	70	39	26	5	83	210	189
St. Louis	68	36	25	7	79	198	188
Dallas	68	35	28	5	75	172	172
Minnesota	69	33	28	8	74	191	202
Colorado	69	30	27	12	72	223	215
Chicago	68	29	30	9	67	227	255

Pacific Division

San Jose	68	41	19	8	90	246	196
Calgary	68	41	20	7	89	235	196
Vegas	69	38	26	5	81	209	190
Arizona	68	34	29	5	73	183	188
Edmonton	68	30	31	7	67	192	221
Vancouver	69	28	32	9	65	187	217
Anaheim	69	27	33	9	63	159	211
Los Angeles	68	24	36	8	56	161	218

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Saturday's games

Colorado 3, Buffalo 0	OT
San Jose 3, St. Louis 1	OT
N.Y. Rangers 4, New Jersey 2	
Philadelphia 5, N.Y. Islanders 2	
Toronto 3, Edmonton 2	
Boston 3, Ottawa 2	
Tampa Bay 3, Detroit 2	
Columbus 4, Pittsburgh 1	
Chicago 2, Dallas 1	
Carolina 5, Nashville 3	
Arizona 4, Los Angeles 2	
Vegas 6, Vancouver 2	

Sunday's games

Detroit at Pittsburgh	
Winnipeg at Washington	
St. Louis at Pittsburgh	
Vegas at Calgary	
Los Angeles at Anaheim	
Monday's games	
Ottawa at Philadelphia	
Dallas at Toronto	
Columbus vs. N.Y. Islanders at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum	
Edmonton at Minnesota	
Arizona at Chicago	
N.Y. Rangers at Edmonton	
Carolina at Colorado	

Saturday

Coyotes 4, Kings 2

Los Angeles	1	0	1-2
Arizona	2	0	2-4

First Period—1, Arizona, Dvorak 1 (Chychrun, Keller), 7:23 (pp). 2, Arizona, Grabner 7 (Ekman-Larsson), 9:30 (sh). 3, Los Angeles, A.Kempe 11 (Doughty).

Power-play opportunities—Los Angeles 12 (5-10), Kings 10 (4-6).
Goals—Los Angeles, Campbell 1 (2-15), Kings, Anderson 1 (1-1), Kucherov 2 (2-15), (36-34).

Shots on goal—Los Angeles 9-18-18, Kings 10-18-18.
Goals—Los Angeles, Campbell 1 (2-15), Kings, Anderson 1 (1-1), Kucherov 2 (2-15), (36-34).

Shots on goal—Los Angeles 9-18-18, Kings 10-18-18.
Goals—Los Angeles, Campbell 1 (2-15), Kings, Anderson 1 (1-1), Kucherov 2 (2-15), (36-34).

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Shots on goal—Los Angeles 9-18-18, Kings 10-18-18.
Goals—Los Angeles, Campbell 1 (2-15), Kings, Anderson 1 (1-1), Kucherov 2 (2-15), (36-34).



MICHAEL Dwyer/AP

Ottawa Senator Zack Smith (15) and Boston Bruin David Krejci (46) battle for the puck during the Bruins' 3-2 win Saturday.

Golden Knights 6, Canucks 2

Vegas	5	1	0
Vancouver	1	1	0

First Period—1, Vegas, Stone 29 (cioretty, Stastny), 1:32. 2, Vegas, Tuch (Merrill), 5:03. 3, Vegas, Eakin 17 (Nost Tuch), 8:33. 4, Vancouver, Boeser 22 (Herterson, Biega), 10:58. 5, Vegas, Nost (Tuch, Miller), 11:52. 6, Vegas, Stastny (Miller, Stone), 14:17.

First Period—1. Vegas, Stastny 9 (Pacoretz, Stastny), 1:12. 2. Vegas, Tuch 18 (Merrill), 5:03. 3. Vegas, Eakin 17 (Nosek, Tuch), 8:33. 4. Vancouver, Bossert 22 (Posterser, Bleiga), 10:58. 5. Vegas, Nosek 7 (Tuch, Merrill), 11:52. 6. Vegas, Stastny 9 (Miller, Stastny), 14:37.

Second Period—1. Vancouver, Horvat 24 (Biega, Rousseau), 3:56. 2. Vegas, Schmidt 9 (Smith, Marchessault), 4:56. **Shots on goal**—Vegas 16-9-31. Vancouver 10-12-9-31.

Power-play opportunities—Vegas 0 of 1; Vancouver 0 of 1.

Goals—Vegas, Fleury 34-19-5 (31 shots-29 saves), Vancouver, Markstrom 24-20-8 (16-11), Demko 1-2-0 (17-16).
A-18,286 (18,910). T-2:21.

Hurricanes 5, Predators 3

First Period—1, Carolina, Niederreiter 19, 14:29. 2, Carolina, Niederreiter (Aho, Teravainen), 19:29 (pp).

Second Period—3, Nashville, Smith (Ellis, Josi), 2:52.

Third Period—4, Carolina, Williams (Teravainen, Faulk), 0:55 (pp). 5, Nashville, Boyle 17 (Turris), 2:35. 6, Carolina, Martinook 15 (Desce, Wallmark). 6

First Period—1. Carolina, Niederreiter 19, 14:29. 2. Carolina, Niederreiter 20 (Aho, Tavares), 18:29 (Pitt).
Second Period—3. Nashville, Smith 18 (Elliott, Stastny), 1:52.

Third Period—4. Carolina, Williams 20 (Teravainen, Faulk), 0:55 (Pitt), 5. Nashville, Boyle 17 (Turris), 2:35. 6. Carolina, Martinook 15 (Pescie, Wallmark), 6:38. 7. Nashville, Granlund 16 (Johansson, Arvidsson), 17:32. 8. Carolina, Aho 30 (Pescie), 19:40.

Shots on goal—Carolina 16-8-32. Nashville 8-13-13-34.

Power-play opportunities—Carolina 2 of 5; Nashville 0 of 4.

Goals—Carolina, Mrazek 17-12-3 (34 shots-31 saves), Nashville, Savers 15-9-2 (31-27).
A-17,724 (17,113). T-2:28.

Flyers 5, Islanders 2

phia, Hartman 11 (Gostisbenere, Prorov), 15:20. 3, Philadelphia, van Riemsdijk 20 (Sanheim, Voracek), 19:56.

Second Period—4, Philadelphia, Crotty 28 (Sanheim, Voracek), 1:34. Philadelphia, Patrick 13 (van Riemsdijk, Giroux), 5:35. 6, Philadelphia, Konecny 1 (Laughton, Gostisbenere), 7:26.

Third Period—7, N.Y. Islanders, Leach 3 (Barzal, Pulock), 16:28.

First Period—1. N.Y. Islanders, Mayfield 4 (Grazzi, Leddy), 6:30. 2. Philadelphia, Hartman 11 (Gostishehev, Provornov), 15:20. 3. Philadelphia, van Riemsdyk 20 (Sanheim, Voracek), 19:56.

Second Period—4. Philadelphia, Couture 28 (Sanheim, Voracek), 1:56. 5. Philadelphia, Patrick 13 (van Riemsdyk, Couture), 11:28. 6. Philadelphia, Leddy (Laughton, Gostishehev), 17:26.

Shots on goal—Philadelphia 10-15-10. 25. N.Y. Islanders 6-8-18.

Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia 1 of 3; Islanders 0 of 3.

Goals—Philadelphia, Elliott 10-8 (27 shots-25 saves), N.Y. Islanders, Greiss 19-11-2 (15-10), Gibson 0-0-0 (10-10).
A-13,917 (13,917). T-2:39.

Rangers 4, Devils 2

6, N.Y. Rangers, Strome 13 (Zibane Namestnikov), 19:50.

Shots on Goal—New Jersey 12-2-1

24. N.Y. Rangers 10-14-17—41.

Power-play opportunities—New Jersey 1 of 2; N.Y. Rangers 0 of 5.

Goalies—New Jersey, Schneider 4-1 (40 shots-37 saves). N.Y. Rangers, Lindqvist 18-17-10 (24-22).

First Period—1. N.Y. Rangers, Strome 12 (Gattonik, Namestnikov), 5:18. 2. Philadelphia, Patrick 13 (van Riemsdyk, Couture), 11:28. 3. Philadelphia, Leddy (Laughton, Gostishehev), 17:26.

Shots on goal—Philadelphia 10-15-10. 25. N.Y. Islanders 6-8-18.

Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia 1 of 3

SPORTS BRIEFS/MLB

Briefly

Kyle Busch rolls to 11th Xfinity win in Arizona

Associated Press

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Kyle Busch certainly knows the way to victory lane at ISM Raceway.

Even after the track was reconfigured.

Busch took the lead shortly after the start of the final stage Saturday and cruised to his second consecutive Xfinity Series victory — and his 11th at the mile-long track just outside Phoenix.

"If I'm allowed to race, I'm going to enter a race and try to go out there and win," said Busch, whose victories at Las Vegas and now this weekend give him 198 in NASCAR's top three series.

Busch was pushed the first half of the race by Christopher Bell, who won the pole and had been consistently fastest in practice. But everything changed when Stephen Leicht, a car in lapped traffic, blew his engine near the start-finish line and sent a cloud of smoke billowing across the track.

Busch was already ahead of him, but Bell and second-place Justin Allgaier were blinded. Throw in some oil that covered the surface and both of them wound up backing into the wall.

Allgaier managed to finish 14th, one lap down, but Bell's day was done.

Ryan Truex finished second in his first start of the season. Reigning series champion Tyler Reddick was third, followed by Cole Custer and Austin Cindric. "We got the car pretty good. We weren't bad there at the end," Custer said. "It's just every single restart I gave up too many stops and couldn't get it going very good."

AP source: Chiefs sign RB Hyde for \$2.8M

The Kansas City Chiefs bolstered their young, relatively unproven backfield Saturday by signing veteran running back Carlos Hyde to a \$2.8 million contract for the 2019 season.

The deal includes \$1.6 million guaranteed, a person familiar with the terms told The Associat-

ed Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the terms were not disclosed.

The 28-year-old Hyde was released by the Jacksonville Jaguars on Friday, and the Chiefs moved swiftly in inviting him for a visit. They were seeking help behind Damien Williams and Darrel Williams, who became their top two running backs when Kareem Hunt was released last season.

The 6-foot, 229-pound Hyde was a second-round pick of the 49ers in 2014, and he came within 50 yards of eclipsing 1,000 twice during his four-year stay in San Francisco. Hyde signed a \$15 million, three-year deal with the Browns last season, but he appeared in just six games before a midseason trade to Jacksonville.

Fitzpatrick takes 1-shot lead over McIlroy

ORLANDO, Fla. — Rory McIlroy seems to have everything going his way at Bay Hill except for recent history.

With three birdies over the last four holes, McIlroy had a 6-under 66 on Saturday that left him one shot behind Matt Fitzpatrick and in the final group of a PGA Tour event for the third time in five starts this year, and the ninth time dating to the start of 2018.

That's a sign of consistently good play.

There's also some frustration from not having won from the final group since the Irish Open in 2016.

And by the look of Bay Hill in the warm, late afternoon — greens that looked yellow, fairways feeling tighter in such firm conditions — it won't be any easier.

"Just what I needed," McIlroy said. "I did everything I needed to do today to get myself back in the golf tournament, and excited to have another chance tomorrow."

Fitzpatrick managed to avoid bogeys on a Bay Hill course so firm he could barely find any pitch marks on the greens Saturday. It led to a 5-under 67 and a one-shot lead as he goes for his first PGA Tour title.



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

The Phillies' Bryce Harper, left, waits for Rhys Hoskins to cross the plate after Hoskins hit a home run off Toronto's Matt Shoemaker during the first inning on Saturday. Harper had walked to get on base.

Harper walks, draws cheers

By ROB MAADDI

Associated Press

CLEARWATER, Fla. — Bryce Harper drew big cheers, a pair of walks and an unusual defense in his spring training debut for the Philadelphia Phillies.

Both times the slugger with the biggest contract in baseball came to the plate, the Toronto Blue Jays shifted to a four-man outfield, moved the shortstop on the other side of second base and gave the left-handed hitting Harper a wide-open left side of the infield.

"I've never seen that. That's intense," Harper said, adding he hopes teams don't do that to him often. "If they start playing ball like that, it's definitely different."

Phillies manager Gabe Kapler didn't want to discuss shift strategy but shared his advice for Harper.

"Hit a lot of homers, drive the ball like you're capable of, do exactly what you always do," be Bryce Harper," said Kapler, who is known for using many shifts.

The Cubs, Astros and even the Rockies have employed a four-man outfield but it was quite strange in an exhibition game.

No surprise, however, was the loud ovation fans gave Harper when he walked up to the plate to Will Smith's theme song from "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air."

Wearing No. 3 on his uniform, eye black under his eyes and a white armband with "HEART" written in red letters around it, Harper dug into the batter's box as "In West Philadelphia born and raised..." blared from the stadium's speakers.

"The ovation they gave me, I'm very humbled, very blessed to be able to get out there and play in front of a fan base like that," Harper said, adding he'll probably use a different walk-up song once the season starts. "Selling out a spring training game is

pretty incredible to see. Just goes to show how great a fan base Philly is."

Batting third as the designated hitter, Harper didn't go deep but jogged around the bases after Rhys Hoskins blasted a two-run homer off Jays right-hander Matt Shoemaker on the first pitch following the first walk in the first.

"Rhys is a special player," Harper said. "Nice to see him jump on the first pitch and go deep. Having Rhys hit behind me, I'm very excited about it."

Harper took a mighty swing and missed on the first pitch he saw and fouled off the first pitch he faced in the third. He looked at eight balls outside the strike zone, including a few close ones. Though he is known for hitting home runs, Harper also is a patient hitter who knows how to work the count. He has a .388 career on-base percentage and had a career-best 130 walks last season.

"It was fun to be out there, get some dirt on my cleats, get in the batter's box and compete. That's what I love to do," Harper said. "I was able to see some pitches, take two swings early in the count, see some splits from a good pitcher, really happy where I was today."

Kapler was impressed.

"That's who Bryce Harper is," the second-year manager said. "He took some strong cuts and the balls he was taking, he was comfortable taking them. It certainly didn't look like his timing or rhythm was off. Looked like Bryce Harper as we saw him in a Nationals uniform last year and he looks much better in a Phillies uniform."

The six-time All-Star outfielder signed a \$330 million, 13-year contract last week, surpassing the \$325 million deal the Miami Marlins gave Giancarlo Stanton in 2014.

Phillies fans have embraced the superstar since his arrival. Fanatics said Harper's No. 3 Phillies jersey was the all-time best-seller for any athlete during the first 24 hours of launch.

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Jae C. Hong/AP

The Celtics' Kyrie Irving, center, puts up a shot in between the Lakers' Johnathan Williams, left, and Moritz Wagner during the second half of Saturday's game in Los Angeles. The Celtics won 120-107.

Roundup

Celtics get by LeBron, Lakers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kyrie Irving scored 30 points and Marcus Smart had 16 in the Boston Celtics' 120-107 victory over the short-handed Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday night in the latest edition of this storied NBA rivalry.

Marcus Morris had 16 points and seven rebounds, and Gordon Hayward added 15 points as the Celtics continued to gather momentum for the postseason with their third consecutive win on a four-game California trip that concludes Monday against the Clippers.

Boston was challenged while LeBron James put up his eighth career triple-double in a patchwork Lakers lineup missing three injured starters, but Irving hit a series of big shots down the stretch to seal it. After missing Wednesday's victory at Sacramento with a bruised thigh, Irving added seven rebounds and seven assists against his famous teammate on the championship-winning Cleveland Cavaliers in 2016.

James had 30 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds in his seventh triple-double for the Lakers, who have lost five straight in a play-off chase that looks futile at this point.

The Lakers played without Brandon Ingram, Lonzo Ball and Kyle Kuzma after receiving another round of discouraging injury news before the game. Ingram was ruled out for the season with a blood clot in his upper body, a potentially serious problem.



STEVE DIPOLIA/AP

Phoenix Suns forward Josh Jackson, left, looks to shoot in front of Trail Blazers forward Maurice Harkless, middle, and center Jusuf Nurkic, right, defend on Saturday in Portland, Ore.

Bucks 131, Hornets 114: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 26 points, 13 rebounds and six assists and host Milwaukee beat Charlotte for its NBA-best 50th victory.

It's just the second 50-win season in the past 30 years for Milwaukee (50-16), which went 52-30 during the 2000-01 season and reached the Eastern Conference finals.

Trail Blazers 127, Suns 120: CJ McCollum scored 26 points and Portland snapped visiting Phoenix's three-game winning streak.

Damian Lillard had 18 points and nine assists, while Jusuf Nurkic added 14 points and nine rebounds.

Nets 114, Hawks 112: Spencer Dinwiddie scored 23 points, Jarrett Allen added 20 points and 12 rebounds and visiting Brooklyn held off Atlanta for its third straight victory.

The Nets moved into a tie for sixth place in the Eastern Conference despite missing a staggering 21 free throws.

Timberwolves 135, Wizards 130 (OT): Karl-Anthony Towns had 40 points and 16 rebounds before leaving in the final seconds of regulation with a knee injury in host Minnesota's overtime victory over Washington.

Kings 102, Knicks 94: De'Aaron Fox had 30 points and eight assists and Sacramento beat New York to open a four-game trip.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	47	19	.712	
Philadelphia	41	25	.621	6
Boston	41	26	.612	7
Brooklyn	35	33	.515	13
New York	13	63	.197	34

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	31	34	.477	—
Orlando	31	36	.463	1
Charlotte	30	36	.455	1½
Washington	29	37	.439	2
Cleveland	22	45	.328	10

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Milwaukee	50	16	.758	—
Indiana	42	24	.636	8
Chicago	31	35	.466	19
Chicago	19	48	.284	31½
Cleveland	16	50	.242	34

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	40	25	.615	—
San Antonio	37	29	.561	3½
New Orleans	38	38	.441	11½
Dallas	27	38	.415	13
Memphis	20	40	.333	14

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	43	26	.622	—
Oklahoma City	40	26	.606	3½
Portland	40	26	.606	3½
Utah	37	29	.561	6
Minnesota	31	35	.466	12½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	45	20	.692	—
L.A. Clippers	38	29	.567	7
Sacramento	33	33	.500	12
L.A. Lakers	30	36	.455	15½
Phoenix	15	52	.224	31

x-clinched playoff spot

Saturday's games

Brooklyn 114, Atlanta 112	120-107
Minnesota 135, Washington 130	OT
Portland 120, L.A. Clippers 112	
Milwaukee 131, Charlotte 114	
Portland 127, Phoenix 120	

Sunday's games

Chicago at Detroit	
Atlanta at Philadelphia	
Toronto at Miami	
New Orleans at Atlanta	
Orlando at Memphis	
Houston at Dallas	
Milwaukee at San Antonio	
New York at Minnesota	
Phoenix at Golden State	

Monday's games

Sacramento at Washington	
Toronto at Cleveland	
Detroit at Brooklyn	
Charlotte at Houston	
Oklahoma City at Utah	
Boston at L.A. Clippers	

Tuesday's games

Cleveland at Philadelphia	
New York at Indiana	
L.A. Lakers at Chicago	
Milwaukee at New Orleans	
San Antonio at Dallas	
Minnesota at Denver	
Portland at L.A. Clippers	

Wednesday's games

Portland at New York	
San Antonio at Dallas	
Minnesota at Denver	
Portland at L.A. Clippers	

Thursday's games

Portland at New York	
San Antonio at Dallas	
Minnesota at Denver	
Portland at L.A. Clippers	

Friday's games

Portland at New York	
San Antonio at Dallas	
Minnesota at Denver	
Portland at L.A. Clippers	

Saturday's games

Celtics 120, Lakers 107	
Boston — Tatum 27-2-2, Morris 7-16-12, Horford 4-6-22, Irving 12-18-11, Smart 6-8-0-16, Brown 12-12-12, Hayward 6-8-24-15, Ojeleye 0-0-0-0, Yabusele 1-2-0-2, Thomas 2-0-0-0, Baynes 3-1-2-7, Wanamaker 0-1-0-0, Rozier 4-8-0-10, Totals 48-26-14-120.	

L.A. Lakers — James 13-23-3-7, 3-7-30, Wagner 13-7-7-22, McGee 3-5-2-8, Rondor 2-7-0-4, Caldwell-Pope 1-5-0-2, Butler 0-0-0-0, Williams 9-16-2-8, Bonga 0-0-0-0, Hart 3-10-0-8, Totals 44-91-14-107.	
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Boston — Tatum 27-2-2, Morris 7-16-12, Horford 4-6-22, Irving 12-18-11, Smart 6-8-0-16, Brown 12-12-12, Hayward 6-8-24-15, Ojeleye 0-0-0-0, Yabusele 1-2-0-2, Thomas 2-0-0-0, Baynes 3-1-2-7, Wanamaker 0-1-0-0, Rozier 4-8-0-10, Totals 48-26-14-120.	
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L.A. Lakers — James 13-23-3-7, 3-7-30, Wagner 13-7-7-22, McGee 3-5-2-8, Rondor 2-7-0-4, Caldwell-Pope 1-5-0-2, Butler 0-0-0-0, Williams 9-16-2-8, Bonga 0-0-0-0, Hart 3-10-0-8, Totals 44-91-14-107.	
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Boston — Tatum 27-2-2, Morris 7-16-12, Horford 4-6-22, Irving 12-18-11, Smart 6-8-0-16, Brown 12-12-12, Hayward 6-8-24-15, Ojeleye 0-0-0-0, Yabusele 1-2-0-2, Thomas 2-0-0-0, Baynes 3-1-2-7, Wanamaker 0-1-0-0, Rozier 4-8-0-10, Totals 48-26-14-120.	
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L.A. Lakers — James 13-23-3-7, 3-7-30, Wagner 13-7-7-22, McGee 3-5-2-8, Rondor 2-7-0-4, Caldwell-Pope 1-5-0-2, Butler 0-0-0-0, Williams 9-16-2-8, Bonga 0-0-0-0, Hart 3-10-0-8, Totals 44-91-14-107.	
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Boston — Tatum 27-2-2, Morris 7-16-12, Horford 4-6-22, Irving 12-18-11, Smart 6-8-0-16, Brown 12-12-12, Hayward 6-8-24-15, Ojeleye 0-0-0-0, Yabusele 1-2-0-2, Thomas 2-0-0-0, Baynes 3-1-2-7, Wanamaker 0-1-0-0, Rozier 4-8-0-10, Totals 48-26-14-120.	
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Timberwolves 135, Wizards 130 (OT)

WASHINGTON — Ariza 8-13-4-27, Green 3-12-4-10, Portis 9-18-0-0-21, Satoransky 4-9-9-9, Bismillah 13-25-8-11, Brown Jr. 1-4-0-0-2, Dekker 1-3-0-2-2, Parker 6-9-0-15, Bryant 7-7-3, Totals 148-100-18-24-130.	
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MINNESOTA — Bates-Diop 5-12-12, Saric 5-10-0-0-13, Towns 15-25-6-40, Teague 2-14-7-7, Okogie 1-5-0-3, Tolliver 1-4-4-7, Gibson 6-11-1-15, Rose 13-23-4-9, Jones 1-5-2-4, Reynolds 2-6-0-0-5, Totals 115-21-24-135.	
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Washington 39 32 28 2-6-30	
Minnesota 28 32 28 1-4-13	

Three-Point Goals—Washington 16-44 (Ariza 7-11, Parker 5-5, Portis 3-6, Beal 2-9, Green 1-5, Brown Jr. 1-2, Satoransky 0-2, Bryant 0-2), Minnesota 12-36 (Towns 2-1, Saric 3-5, Okogie 1-1, Reynolds 1-4, Tolliver 1-4, Bates-Diop 1-4, Teague 1-6, Jones 0-1, Rose 0-2), Fouled Out—None.	
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Rebounds—Washington 50 (Portis 12), Minnesota 56 (Towns 16), Assists—Washington 31 (Satoransky 11), Minnesota 25 (Teague 8), Total Fouls—Washington 23, Minnesota 17, Technicals—Ariza, Teague, Okogie, A—14-381 (19,356).	
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Nets 114, Hawks 112

BROOKLYN — Harris 3-10-4-11, Kurucs 5-7-2-16, Allen 5-10-16-20, Russell 6-23-3-18, Crabtree 2-7-11-57, Carroll 4-8-3-13, Davis 0-1-1-1, Dinwiddie 7-14-5-8-23, LeVert 1-6-0-2, Totals 33-86-33-54-114.	
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Atlanta — Prince 5-11-0-13, Collins 13-20-13, Lein 3-14-12, Young 12-14-13-16-23, Huertner 1-8-2-4, Johnson 0-2-0-0, Bembry 3-0-0-2, Zeller 0-2-0-0, Carter 4-13-2-10, Anderson 0-1-0-0, Bazemore 1-6-2-5, Adams 1-6-0-3, Totals 39-105-26-112.	
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Brooklyn 26 30 27 31-114	
Atlanta 23 24 28 38-112	

Three-Point Goals—Brooklyn 15-44 (Kurucs 4-5, Dinwiddie 4-7, Russell 1-2, Bismillah 1-2, Harris 1-2, Crabtree 1-2), Atlanta 8-41 (Prince 3-6, Young 2-4, Zeller 1-2, Johnson 1-2, LeVert 1-2, Anderson 0-1, Zeller 0-1, Huertner 0-2, Johnson 0-2, Bembry 0-2, Carter 0-6, Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Brooklyn 53 (Allen 12), Atlanta 57 (Collins 20), Assists—Brooklyn 21 (Dinwiddie 12), Atlanta 22 (Young 11), Total Fouls—Brooklyn 23, Atlanta 17, Technicals—Allen, Carroll, A—16,527 (18,118).	
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Trail Blazers 127, Suns 120

PHOENIX — Oubre Jr. 6-17-5-17, Bender 2-4-0-1-5, Ayton 10-17-11-21, Johnson 1-11-5-14, Booker 1-8-8-8, Jackson 3-9-1-9, Bridges 4-6-3-14, Spalding 0-0-0-0, Holm 3-9-3-9-6, Melton 0-0-0-0, Daniels 2-3-0-5, Crawford 2-7-2-8, Totals 43-103-25-120.	
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Portland — Harkless 3-4-2-49, Aminu 2-6-0-5, Nurkic 4-12-8-14, Lillard 4-11-9-18, McCollum 11-16-12-25, Layman 4-7-1-29, Collins 0-5-0-0, Leonard 1-3-0-0, Labissiere 0-0-0-0, Kanter 2-3-4-12, Curry 6-11-7-7-22, Hood 1-1-2-4, Simons 2-0-0-5, Totals 48-26-18-127.	
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Portland 23 24 30 43-120	
Phoenix 24 42 36 25-127	

Three-Point Goals—Phoenix 9-27 (Jackson 2-3, Crawford 2-2, Daniels 1-2, Bridges 1-2, Bender 1-3, Johnson 1-4, Booker 1-4, Oubre Jr. 0-4), Portland 13-29 (McCollum 4-7, Curry 3-6, Lillard 2-4, Harkless 1-2, Leonard 1-2, Aminu 1-3, Simons 1-3, Collins 0-1, Layman 0-2), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Phoenix 43 (Ayton 8), Portland 22 (Nurkic 9), Assists—Phoenix 27 (Johnson 7), Portland 22 (Lillard 7), Total Fouls—Phoenix 23, Portland 17, Technicals—Oubre Jr., Johnson, Kanter, A—18,551 (19,393).	
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Bucks 131, Hornets 114

CHARLOTTE — Bridges 7-9-0-15, Williams 2-9-0-5, Zeller 3-8-4-10, Walker 2-9-0-5, Harkless 1-2-0-0, Kaminjarsky 4-4-4-16, Hemanogomez 1-1-1-3, Graham 2-6-1-6, Monk 1-0-0-4, Bacon 1-5-0-3, Lamb 0-0-0-0, Totals 42-90-9.	
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Milwaukee — Middleton 4-12-0-9, Klaythorn 1-2-0-0, Giannis 12-12-12-25, Bledsoe 3-10-2-11, Brogdon 7-12-1-16, Westbrook 1-2-0-0, Myles Turner 7-12-1-16, Mirotic 1-0-1-2, Snell 2-7-0-4, Cousins 0-0-0-0, Delvecchio 4-7-0-11, Totals 44-90-26-131.	
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Charlotte 32 27 28 27-114	
Milwaukee 32 27 28 27-114	

Three-Point Goals—Charlotte 15-39 (Kaminjarsky 4-5, Walker 3-8, Batum 2-7, Bledsoe 1-2, Zeller 1-2, Harkless 1-3, Bacon 1-3, Williams 1-4, Lamb 0-4), Milwaukee 12-40 (Mirotic 4-7, Middleton 3-5, Dincenceno 3-6, Brogdon 2-4, Antetokounmpo 1-2, Giannis 1-2, Layman 1-3, Snell 0-2, Ilyasova 0-3), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Charlotte 29 (Batum 12), Milwaukee 35 (Antetokounmpo 13), Assists—Charlotte 25 (Kaminjarsky 5), Milwaukee 27 (Antetokounmpo 6), Total Fouls—24, Milwaukee 17, A—19,796 (17,500).	
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Calendar

April 10 — Regular season ends.	
April 13 — Playoffs begin.	
April 14 — First round in Chicago.	
May 14-19 — Draft combine, Chicago.	
May 30 — NBA Finals begin.	
June 1-10 — Finals latest possible date.	

June 20 — NBA Draft.	
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NFL



ULYSSES MUNOZ, BALTIMORE SUN/TNS

Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown (84) celebrates a touchdown against the Ravens on Nov. 4 in Baltimore. Pittsburgh sent Brown to the Raiders for two draft picks.

Out: Brown gives Carr biggest offensive weapon as Raiders give up little in deal

FROM BACK PAGE

Pro Football Talk first reported the deal and says Pittsburgh will get third- and fifth-round draft picks from Oakland.

The trade makes final what became a very messy and very public divorce between Brown and the team that helped turn the sixth-round pick into arguably the greatest wide receiver of his generation.

It also gives the Raiders a high-profile addition for second-year coach Jon Gruden after trading away two of the team's biggest stars last year in edge rusher Khalil Mack and receiver Amari Cooper.

Oakland got extra first-round picks in those trades but didn't need to give up any of its four picks in the top 35 in the upcoming draft to acquire Brown, who has topped 100 receptions and 1,200 yards receiving in each of the past six seasons. The Raiders have had only one player reach those marks in a single season in franchise history, with Hall of Famer Tim Brown accomplishing the feat in 1997.

Brown now gives quarterback Derek Carr his biggest offensive weapon since entering the league in 2014 and the Raiders a legitimate star before they move to Las Vegas for the 2020 season.

The Raiders' top wide receiver last season was Jordy Nelson, who had just 63 catches for 739 yards.

Gruden has always admired Brown from his time as a broadcaster and had nothing but praise for the receiver before the teams played last December.

"He's the hardest working

man, I think, in football," Gruden said. "Hardest working player I've ever seen practice. I've seen Jerry Rice. I've seen a lot of good ones, but I put Antonio Brown at the top. If there are any young wideouts out there, I'd go watch him practice. You figure out yourself why he's such a good player."

Brown was obviously pleased with the development, posting a picture of himself in a Raiders uniform and a video with Carr at a Pro Bowl with the caption "Love at first sight" on his Twitter account.

Brown is no stranger to drawing headlines for both his pro-life on-field production and his off-the-field antics, including livestreaming from the locker room after a playoff win over Kansas City in January 2017 and getting pulled over for doing 100 mph in the northern Pittsburgh suburbs last fall.

The sometimes tumultuous relationship between the only player in NFL history with six straight 100-catch seasons and the franchise that made him the highest-paid player at his position in the spring of 2017 reached a breaking point in late December.

Steelers coach Mike Tomlin benched Brown during the regular-season finale against Cincinnati after the wide receiver went radio silent in the final 48 hours before the game. Brown arrived in a fur coat, hung out for a half and then disappeared from view until well after his teammates had cleaned out their lockers following a 9-6-1 finish that left Pittsburgh on the outside of the playoffs for the first time since 2013.

When Brown did resurface,

he began engaging in a series of increasingly antagonistic acts designed to expedite his departure. He went on Instagram with former Steelers linebacker James Harrison during Tomlin's season wrap-up press conference. He decried quarterback Ben Roethlisberger's "owner's mentality" and chastised Tomlin for disciplining him in Week 17, no matter that Tomlin and the rest of the organization had spent years downplaying Brown's off-the-field eccentricities.

Brown officially requested a trade last month, but not before photo-editing his familiar No. 84 onto a San Francisco 49ers jersey or using his hyperactive social media feeds to indicate not only his displeasure with the Steelers but also his interest in signing a new deal with whomever should acquire his services.

Even with his benching in the finale, Brown caught 104 passes for 1,297 yards and a franchise-record and NFL-high 15 touchdowns. His last performance in a Pittsburgh uniform might have been one of his best, a 14-reception, 185-yard, two-touchdown masterpiece in a road loss to New Orleans.

A week later, the player who once said he wanted to retire a Steeler didn't even suit up against the Bengals. Just over two months later, he now finds himself heading to the second act of a career that's on a Hall of Fame trajectory and the Steelers have a hole at receiver and more than \$21 million in dead money on their salary cap.

AP Sports Writer Will Graves in Pittsburgh contributed to this report

Teams want OT, replay changes

Proposals include making more plays reviewable, new format for overtime

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

NFL teams proposed major changes to replay and overtime on Saturday after a season of consistent criticism of officiating and which plays can be challenged or automatically reviewed.

Among the proposals teams have made to the league's competition committee are an increase in the number of plays subject to video replay review and a change to the overtime format.

The idea of more or even unlimited coaches' challenges is not new, but could have stronger support now. Also, the league is reluctant to expand replays for officiating because it would slow games even further.

The competition committee will present teams' proposals and some of its own to the 32 owners at the league meetings March 24-27.

Several teams are proposing major moves.

Washington wants any play to be subject to coaches' challenges or to automatic review by the officiating department in New York. The Redskins also suggested that all personal fouls be subject to review, while Kansas City added potential personal fouls that were not called on the field be looked at.

Philadelphia seeks scoring plays and turnovers negated by a penalty be immediately reviewed, and Denver suggests adding all fourth-down plays that are spotted short of a first down or the goal line, and all extra-point tries.

The Rams, Panthers, Seahawks and Eagles want to include reviews of designated player safety-related fouls whether called or not on the field.

Kansas City proposes that both teams possess the ball at least one time in overtime even if the first team with the ball scores a touchdown.

The Chiefs also want to eliminate overtime for the preseason, and get rid of the overtime coin toss to begin the game may choose whether to kick or receive, or which goal to defend in OT.

Fans and many media members have vociferously expressed displeasure with the current system regarding coaches' challenges since a blown call late in the NFC championship game — officials missed a blatant pass interference penalty and a helmet-first hit by the Rams' Nickell Robey-Coleman deep in Los Angeles territory. The non-calls helped Los

'I just don't sense a lot of support to use replay to call penalties. I don't sense a lot of support for the expansion of it, either. We're early on, so that might change, but that's my sense of where we are right now.'

John Mara
Giants owner

Angeles force overtime and eventually win the game to reach the Super Bowl.

But New York Giants owner John Mara said last month at the NFL combine that the powerful competition committee might not feel the same way.

"I just don't sense a lot of support to use replay to call penalties. I don't sense a lot of support for the expansion of it, either," Mara said. "We're early on, so that might change, but that's my sense of where we are right now. I'm not saying it won't change."

While the league is wary of expanded replays, the Eagles' suggestion on scoring plays and turnovers negated by penalty being reviewed could garner support.

Kansas City's overtime proposals also stem from recent developments, including the Chiefs losing the AFC championship after rallying to tie New England. The Patriots won the coin toss, drove downfield and scored a touchdown without KC ever touching the ball.

The 2017 Super Bowl ended in similar fashion.

Denver recommended an alternative to inside kicks by allowing a team once during the fourth quarter to play offense instead. That team must notify the referee of its intention to forgo a kickoff or safety kick. The ball will be spotted on the kicking team's 35-yard line and that team will have one down to gain 15 yards, essentially a fourth-and-15 play. If the play succeeds in gaining a first down, that team keeps possession as if it recovered an onside kick.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

No. 3 UNC stops No. 4 Duke

Tar Heels clinch a share of ACC regular-season title with victory

By AARON BEARD
Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Third-ranked North Carolina handled every push fourth-ranked Duke could manage, both in building a big lead and then hanging onto what was left of its edge in the final minutes.

When it was over, the Tar Heels were ready to cut down nets, too. Freshman Cody White scored 21 points and UNC took down its biggest rival again, beating the short-handed Blue Devils 79-70 to earn a share of the Atlantic Coast Conference regular-season

championship.

The win also gave the Tar Heels their first regular-season sweep of the Blue Devils in a decade, this one with Duke freshman star Zion Williamson sidelined yet again by the knee sprain.

Afterward, as fans lingered, the Tar Heels started working on the net to celebrate.

"It's OK if you need to go, it's all right," UNC coach Roy Williams told the crowd as arena staff brought ladders onto the court. "Because we're going to have fun ourselves. We're going to cut down that frickin' net as

ACC champions."

Senior Kenny Williams scored a season-high 18 points for the Tar Heels (26-5, 16-2), who led by 15 with about 6½ minutes left but had to hold off a rally by the Blue Devils, who also lost starting big man Marques Bolden early in this one to his own knee injury.

The Tar Heels bumbled their way to the finish after building their big lead, letting the Blue Devils (26-5, 14-4) get within five late. Ultimately UNC held on to finish tied alongside second-ranked Virginia out the final league standings.



GERRY BROOME/AP

Cody White led No. 3 North Carolina with 21 points in a 79-70 win over No. 4 Duke on Saturday in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Roundup

Jerome leads No. 2 Virginia past Louisville

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Ty Jerome scored 24 points, including the go-ahead free throw with 5:34 remaining, and Virginia held off Louisville 73-68 on Saturday to wrap up the top seed in the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament.

Virginia (28-2, 16-2) tied North Carolina for the regular-season title, but got the top seed by virtue of its victory at UNC on Feb. 11.

Kyle Guy added 13 points and Jay Huff also made huge contributions at both ends to help Virginia win its eighth in a row.

Jordan Nwora scored 19 points for the Cardinals (19-12, 0-8).

No. 6 Kentucky 66, Florida 57: Tyler Herro scored 16 points and led a big second-half run that helped the host Wildcats overcome the Gators.

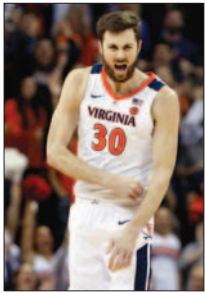
Kentucky (26-5, 15-3 Southeastern Conference) went back and forth with Florida (17-14, 9-9) early in the second half and trailed 40-39 with 13:46 remaining. Herro had six points during a 15-2 spree, hitting a couple of shots in the lane and adding two free throws, to give the Wildcats a 54-42 advantage. Kentucky capped the seven-minute burst by scoring 10 straight points.

PJ Washington added 15 points for the Wildcats. Kevonius Hayes had 19 points for the Gators.

No. 10 LSU 80, Vanderbilt 59: Tremont Waters had 14 points and eight assists and the host Tigers won the Southeastern Conference regular-season title in LSU's first game without suspended head coach Will Wade.

Darius Days scored a season-high 15 points and Marshall Graves had a season-high 12 — all on three-pointers — for the Tigers (26-5, 16-2).

The game came a day after Wade's indefinite suspension in the wake of published excerpts of a wire-tapped phone call between the coach and a man convicted last year in federal court



STEVE HELMER/AP

Virginia forward Jay Huff reacts to a basket and a foul during his team's 73-68 win against Louisville on Saturday.

of funneling illegal payments to the families of college basketball recruits.

The Commodores (9-22, 0-18) became the first team to go winless in the SEC since former league member Georgia Tech in 1954, and the first ever to do so with an 18-game conference schedule.

No. 11 Purdue 70, Northwestern 57: Carsen Edwards scored 21 points and the Boilermakers clinched a share of the Big Ten regular-season championship on the road.

Purdue (23-3, 16-4) secured the No. 2 seed in the conference tournament in Chicago and a share of its second regular-season title in three years. The Boilermakers tied Michigan State, a winner over Michigan on Saturday night.

A.J. Turner scored 14 points for the last-place Wildcats (13-18, 4-16).

No. 14 Florida State 65, Wake Forest 57: Trent Forrest scored 11 points and the Seminoles reeled off 18 straight points in the second half for the road win.

FSU (25-6, 13-5 Atlantic Coast Conference) has won 12 of its last 13 games.

Brandon Childress scored 13 points for the Demon Deacons (11-19, 4-14).

Georgetown 86, No. 16 Marquette 84: James Ajinjo scored 25 points, Mac McClung added 23 and the Hoyas won on the road to hand the Golden Eagles' their fourth straight loss to close the regular season.

Jamorko Pickett and Jessie Gowan each added 10 points for Georgetown (18-13, 9-9 Big East).

Markus Howard led Marquette (23-8, 12-6) with 28 points, and Joey Hauser added 16. The Golden Eagles missed a chance to tie Villanova for the conference title.

No. 17 Nevada 81, San Diego State 53: Caleb Martin scored 25 points and twin brother Cody added 14 to lead the host Wolfpack to a share of the Mountain West title with Utah State.

The Martin twins combined to shoot 12-for-19 and Nevada (28-3, 15-3 Mountain West) finished at 53.1 percent as a team. Jordan Caroline had 16 points and Trey Porter had 13 as the Wolfpack finished with a perfect regular-season home record (15-0).

Jeremy Hensley led the Aztecs (19-12, 11-7) with 16 points.

No. 18 Kansas State 68, Oklahoma 53: Kamau Stokes scored 19 points and the host Wildcats clinched a share of the Big 12 regular-season title.

Barry Brown added 15 points, Dean Wade had 11 and the Kansas State (24-7, 14-4) finished atop the conference for the second time in 42 years. The Wildcats shared the title with Texas Tech.

Kristian Doolittle scored 14 points for Oklahoma (19-12, 7-11).

No. 22 Wofford 99, VMI 72: Nathan Hoover scored 17 points and the Terriers extended their school-record winning streak to 18 games, beating the Keydets in the quarterfinals of the Southern Conference Tournament.

Fletcher Magee, the Southern Conference Player of the Year,

was limited to 11 points on 4-for-11 shooting for Wofford (27-4). He made two three-pointers, moving within 13 of breaking the NCAA Division I record of 504 career threees held by Travis Bader of Oakland.

Bubba Parham led VMI (11-21) with 22 points.

Seton Hall 79, No. 23 Villanova 75: Myles Powell scored 20 points, Myles Cale added 19 and the host Pirates upset the Wildcats, three days after knocking off No. 16 Marquette to revive Seton Hall's chances of getting into the NCAA Tournament.

Seton Hall (18-12, 9-9), picked to finish eighth in the 10-team conference in the preseason poll, has exceeded all expectations playing with lone senior Michael Nzei, Jared Rhoden had a career-high 15 points.

Villanova (22-9, 13-5) came into the game needing a win to clinch its fifth outright tie in six years. Despite the loss, the Wildcats won the crown and the No. 1 seed in next week's tournament when Georgetown beat Marquette.

Temple 67, No. 25 Central Florida 62: Shizz Alston Jr. scored 21 points, Justin Hamilton tied a career high with 13 and the Owls won in Temple coach Fran Dunphy's final home game before he steps down at the end of the season.

Quinton Rose broke a 52-all tie with a highlight-reel slam over Dayton Griffin with 4:12 remaining. Rose scored nine of his 11 points in the second half for the Owls (23-8, 13-5 American Athletic Conference).

Aubrey Dawkins led UCF (23-7, 13-5) with a career-high 36 points.

Boise State 80, Air Force 52: Derrick Alston scored 22 points, Zach Haneey added 20 points for the host Broncos.

Boise State took a 45-24 halftime lead by shooting 57 percent from the floor and making 7 of 16 three-pointers (39 percent).

Lavelle Scottie led Air Force (13-17, 8-10) with 10 points.

Scoreboard

Saturday's men's scores

EAST	
Cornell 66, Dartmouth 51	
Dayton 78, Duquesne 67	
George Mason 81, George Washington 65	
Harvard 83, Columbia 81, OT	
La Salle 72, Fordham 57	
NC State 73, Boston College 47	
Penn St. Brown 51	
Pittsburgh 56, Notre Dame 53	
Providence 83, Butler 70	
Rhode Island 54, UMass 75	
Seton Hall 79, Villanova 75	
St. Bonaventure 66, Saint Louis 57	
Temple 67, UCF 62	
Vale 81, Princeton 59	
SOUTH	
Ark.-Pine Bluff 91, MVU 57	
Albany 84, Tennessee 80	
Cent. Arkansas 70, Northwestern 63	
Clemson 67, Syracuse 55	
Dallas 73, Richmond 69	
FIU 73, North Texas 58	
Florida St. Wake Forest 57	
Georgia St. 90, Georgia Southern 85	
Grambling St. 66, Alabama A&M 58	
Jackson St. 82, Alabama St. 70	
Kentucky 66, Florida 57	
LSU 80, Vanderbilt 59	
Marshall 76, FAU 61	
MIDWEST	
Middle Tennessee 48, UTEP 47	
Mississippi St. 92, Texas A&M 81	
Nicholls 69, SE Louisiana 63	
North Carolina 79, Duke 70	
South Alabama 78, Appalachian St. 71	
South Carolina 66, Georgia 46	
Southern Miss. 81, UTSA 48	
Troy 74, Coastal Carolina 67	
UAB 61, Old Dominion 50	
Virginia 73, Louisville 68	
Wichita St. 82, Tulane 79	
WEST	
Cregon 91, DePaul 78	
Georgetown 86, Marquette 84	
Kansas 78, Baylor 70	
Kansas St. 68, Oklahoma 53	
Michigan St. 63, Michigan 63	
Mississippi Tech 73, Missouri 68	
Purdue 70, Northwestern 57	
Texas Tech 80, Iowa St. 73	
UW-Madison 76, Chicago St. 61	
Xavier 81, St. John's 68	
WEST	
Abilene Christian 81, Incarnate Word 51	
Arkansas 82, Alabama 70	
Charlotte 78, Rice 70	
Carter 63, McNeese 58	
Louisiana-Lafayette 90, Arkansas St. 67	
Louisiana-Monroe 79, UALR 62	
Oklahoma St. 85, West Virginia 77	
San Diego 82, Air Force 52	
Sam Houston 58, Stephen F. Austin 57	
TCU 89, UT-Rio Grande 77	
UT-Dallas 65, Houston Baptist 69	
Utah-Arizona 81, Texas St. 73	
FAR WEST	
Arizona St. 72, Arizona 64	
San Diego St. 80, Air Force 52	
Colorado 78, Southern Cal 67	
E. Washington 80, Weber St. 77	
Fresno St. 81, San Diego St. 81	
Hawaii 71, Cal St.-Fullerton 59	
Idaho 70, Utah State 63	
Montana 86, Sacramento St. 68	
UC Riverside 71, UC Davis 70	
UC Santa Barbara 92, Cal Poly 82	
Utah Valley 76, Bakersfield 61	
Wyoming 88, New Mexico 81	

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Auburn shocks Tennessee to cap regular season

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — The Auburn Tigers saved their best for last, and so did Jared Harper.

Harper made four straight free throws over the final 31 seconds and two late three-pointers to help Auburn clinch an 84-80 victory over No. 5 Tennessee on Saturday in the regular-season finale.

The Tigers (22-9, 11-7 Southeastern Conference) collected their fourth straight win and biggest of the season in a packed Auburn Arena. It was Auburn's first win over a Top 5 team since beating Arkansas in 1995.

"Everybody in the country recognizes that Tennessee is a Final Four team," said Auburn coach Bruce Pearl, a former Tennessee head man. "Everybody in the country now recognizes that Auburn is capable of beating and, in fact, did beat a Final Four team."

The Volunteers (27-4, 15-3) could have clinched at least a share of the SEC regular-season title with a win but No. 10 LSU claimed the championship outright with a win over Vanderbilt. The Vols have never won back-to-back SEC championships, and will be the No. 3 seed in the league tournament.

"A year ago, you think about it, we win the league with five losses," Tennessee coach Rick Barnes said. "This year we only have three. You have to learn from this. Some of the mistakes we made today, we can't make. Not at this time of year."

The two teams shared the SEC regular-season title last year and Auburn spent six weeks ranked in the Top 10 before falling from the rankings.

Auburn relished the spoiler role this time. The Tigers will be the No. 5 SEC seed and receive a first-round bye in the league tournament.

Auburn's Samir Doughty grabbed the ball after Grant Williams' shot was blocked and made a three-pointer to beat the



Auburn guard Jared Harper, center, collides with Tennessee guard Jordan Bone on his way to the basket during Auburn's 84-80 win Saturday.

shot clock. Harper hit two free throws with 31 seconds left for an 80-74 cushion, and Jordan Bone's three-point attempt at the other end didn't fall.

Williams got the rebound and drew a Flagrant 1 foul from Auburn's McLemore. Williams made two free throws with 23 seconds left and the Vols got another possession. Williams launched a quick basket off the inbound play. But Harper hit two more free throws with 20 seconds left for an 82-78 lead. He had sealed Tuesday night's 66-60 win at Alabama with two late drives.

"He just has had four great games," Pearl said. "In many ways, [he] put the team on his back, accepting the responsibility of a quarterback to have to make plays. He's been exceptional."

Chuma Okeke led Auburn with 22 points, one shy of his career high. Harper had 16 points and eight assists, with his only two three-pointers coming back to back in the final minutes.

Williams finished with 25 points and nine rebounds for the Vols.



Michigan State's Aaron Henry, right, and Michigan's Jordan Poole reach for a rebound during the Spartans' 75-63 win Saturday to clinch a share of the Big Ten title with Purdue.

Winston's banner effort

Guard leads Spartans to a share of the Big Ten title

By LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Cassius Winston struggled to make shots for more than a half and his rivals took advantage, controlling a game with a share of the Big Ten title at stake.

When Winston started to finally get shots to drop, though, he took over and there wasn't much anyone could do about it.

Winston made five straight baskets in the second half to lead a stunning surge and finished with 23 points and seven assists, lifting No. 9 Michigan State to a 75-63 victory over No. 7 Michigan on Saturday night.

The Spartans (25-6, 16-4 Big Ten) earned a share of the Big Ten title with Purdue and top seeding in next week's conference tournament.

"It meant the world after all we've been through to come out on top," Winston said.

The crafty junior point guard has been leading a team missing two of its best players, Nick Ward and Joshua Langford, due to injuries.

The Wolverines (26-5, 15-5) will be seeded third in Chicago after falling to third place behind their rivals and No. 11 Purdue.

"We'll take the lessons we learned from this game, apply them to the Big Ten tournament so that we can win that again," Michigan coach John Beilein said. "If we can't, we'll apply it to the NCAA Tournament."

Winston was 1-for-8 before making five consecutive shots in the second half, including a three-pointer to give Michigan State its first lead midway through the second half.

"Michigan was bothering him in the first half," coach Tom Izzo said.

Winston made a layup with 5:58 left to cap a 25-4 run.

"We imploded," Beilein said.

Murray State races into NCAA tourney

Associated Press

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Murray State guard Ja Morant was determined to finish his job Saturday night.

With the Racers' NCAA Tournament hopes on the line, the sophomore standout came through in the second half in front of more than 10,000 fans at Ford Center.

Morant scored 22 of his 36 points after the break and made all nine of his free throws to give Murray State a 77-65 victory over Belmont in the Ohio Valley Conference championship game.

The Racers (27-4) earned the league's automatic bid into the NCAA Tournament — the first spot to be taken this year and the team's second consecutive berth under head coach Matt McMahon.

During Friday's semifinal win over Austin Peay, Morant missed five of his 15 free throws. That stuck with the 6-foot-3 point guard.

"I was a little frustrated with myself last night ... I mean, they're free," Morant said. "Tonight, I was just locked in and just followed through with all my shots

and was able to make them."

Morant, the OVC Player of the Year, played the entire 40 minutes. He was 13-for-25 shooting and added seven rebounds and three assists.

He scored eight successive points down the stretch in the second half to help withstand a rally by Belmont (26-5), which saw its 15-game winning streak end. After his assist to Tevin Brown's three-pointer to put the Racers up by six with 56 seconds left, Darnell Cowart drew a charge on the next possession to essentially seal the win.



SAM OWENS, EVANSVILLE COURIER & PRESS/AP

Murray State's Ja Morant puts a Racers sticker on an NCAA tournament board following the team's win Saturday over Belmont in the Ohio Valley Conference tournament championship.

SPORTS



Tar Heels top Duke
No. 3 UNC claims share of
ACC title with win » **Page 30**

NFL

BROWN: OUT

Source: Raiders acquire
disgruntled Steelers WR

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

The Oakland Raiders agreed on a deal Saturday night to acquire prolific but disgruntled receiver Antonio Brown from the Pittsburgh Steelers and will give him the lucrative new contract he wanted.

A person with direct knowledge of the trade told The Associated Press that the Raiders finalized the deal with the Steelers and will give Brown a new three-year contract worth \$50.125 million instead of the \$38.925 million he was owed by Pittsburgh. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal can't be completed until the new league year starts Wednesday.

**SEE OUT ON
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The Steelers have reached a deal to send wide receiver Antonio Brown to the Raiders in exchange for third- and fifth-round draft picks.

DON WRIGHT/AP



Murray State first to clinch an NCAA berth » Page 31

